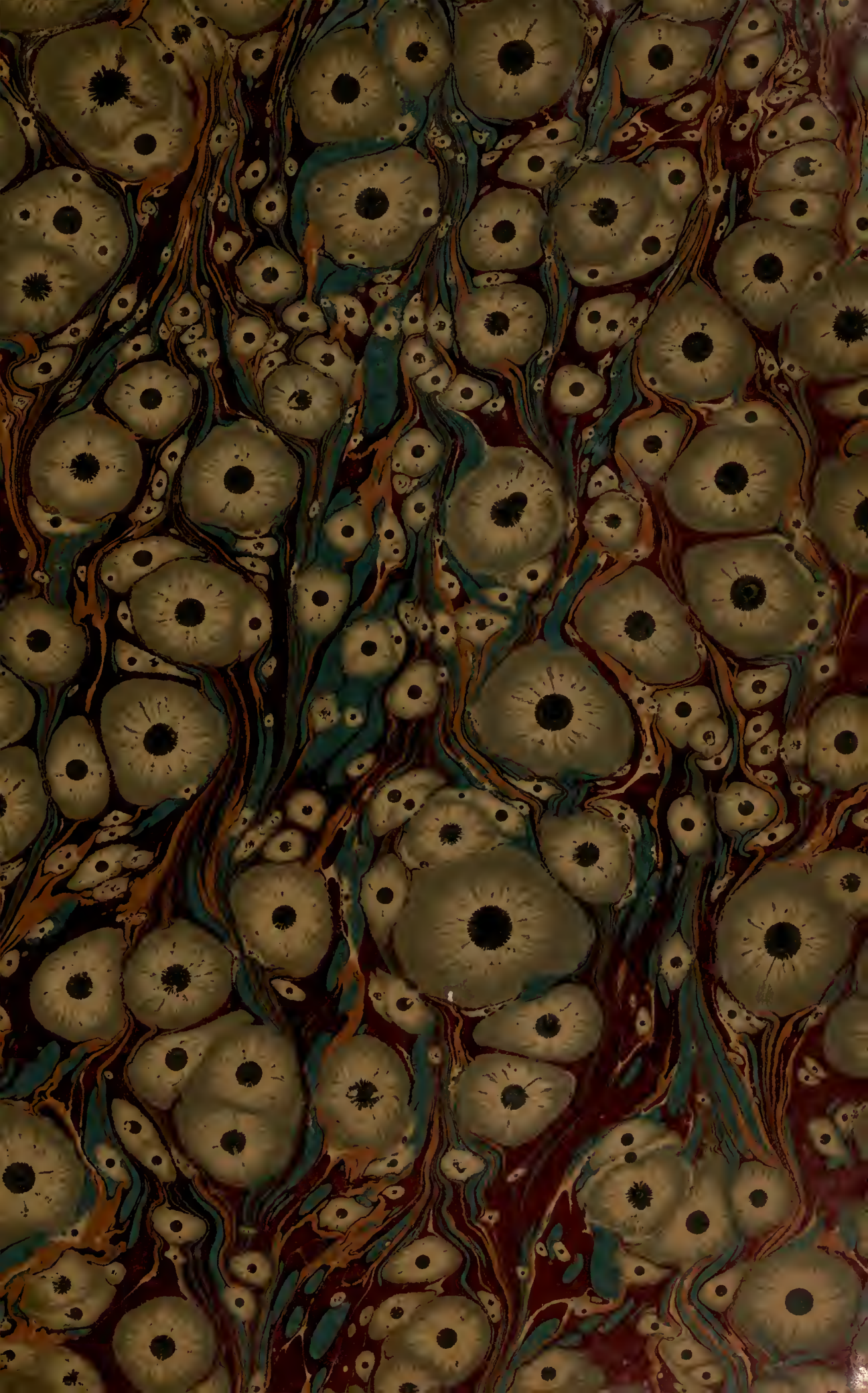








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BLESSED
JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.





BLESSED
J. B. DE LA SALLE

FOUNDER OF THE INSTITUTE
OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS,

BY

ARMAND RAVELET.

INTRODUCTION BY M^{OR} D'HULST.



PARIS,

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OF

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PREFACE.



Paris. — Statue of Blessed de la Salle, by Montagny, intended for the basilica of Saint Geneviève.

PREFACE.



BOOK like this needs very few words of preface. The process instituted by order of the Holy See for the beatification of Blessed de la Salle inspired us with the desire of studying his virtues.

The services he is still rendering, through his disciples, to the people who often requite them with ingratitude, made us feel that it was a duty to write his life.

It is written conscientiously. The very honored Brother Philip, who took a lively interest in this work, placed

at my disposal the valuable archives of the mother-house. A great number of Brothers (with a ready kindness which I gladly acknowledge) communicated to me the documents they had collected. I was fortunate enough to find, in the National Archives in Paris, all the deeds relating to the law-suit which the school-masters carried on against

M. de la Salle, and which so long hindered his undertaking. The archives of Rouen, Rheims, Châlons, Mende, also contain documents that do not appear to have been known to the preceding biographers of Venerable de la Salle.

I hope, therefore, that my work is new, and that it throws a fuller light on that wonderful life, over whose splendor Venerable de la Salle's humility cast a veil. The time has come to do him justice. We owe it to his disciples, who carry on his work; to France, to whom he his an honor, and to ourselves.

In the life of Blessed de la Salle, it is the Saint above all that we ought to study. It is in his love of prayer, his charity, his supernatural virtues, heroically practised, that we must see the root of those eminent qualities which distinguished him in the eyes of the world, and the cause of the success of that gigantic undertaking which seemed to be beyond human strength. The public man is always an incomplete revelation of the interior man. In M. de la Salle, the founder was great, but the Saint was greater still, and it is on the Saint that we must fix our attention. We shall thus honor Faith, which should be the first inspirer of all our actions, and we shall fail in no duty to history. On the contrary, in these sincere pages, we apply the highest of all laws, that law which commands us to seek in the lives of souls the explanation of external events, and to measure the real grandeur of souls themselves by their obedience to the will of God.

1874.

ARMAND RAVELET.

Armand Ravelet died prematurely, a year after the completion of his book, a year after he had written the foregoing lines where the beauty of his soul truly reveals itself. The day came, however, when his work was to see the light; but the dear workman was no longer there to give it a new life.

One of his friends has endeavoured to take his place.

The book of Armand Ravelet, very respectfully altered and completed, is now divided into three parts, the titles of which explain their character and interest— I. Education before Blessed de la Salle; II. Life of Blessed de la Salle; III. Growth and development of the work of Blessed de la Salle.

In the first part, Armand Ravelet generously resolved to write a "History of Primary education up to the first attempts of Blessed de la Salle;" but, since 1874, the question of the primary schools has assumed an altogether exceptional importance in contemporary controversy. It was therefore necessary to recast the original work, and a former pupil of the *Ecole des Chartes* undertook to overlook it. He took counsel, he read up all that has been written on the subject, he summed it up, and readers have here in a hundred pages the quintessence of all the memoirs and books which, up to the end of the year 1887, have been written on this important subject.

The life of the Venerable founder was, according to the opinion of the most competent judges, the best part of Armand Ravelet's book. It was revised with the greatest care; but it remains the original book, the outcome of long research, accurate, pious, learned and animated, erudite and poetic. Chief editor of a great Catholic journal, Armand Ravelet knew better than any one how to adapt the life of a Saint to the intellectual needs of contemporary generations. He has written, with this noble aim, a living work. It contains pages which will rank amongst the most delicate in the Catholic literature of the nineteenth century.

Here, indeed, ended the work of Armand Ravelet, and we considered that it was not complete. In all the lives of Saints which have been recently published, the biographer is careful not to stop at the death of him whose glory he has undertaken to describe. For the Saints, in truth, survive themselves, and this admirable survival is especially characteristic of the founders of orders. These orders are their lives continued in history. When, quite lately, a new biography of St Francis of Assisi was published, the writer did not omit to trace in broad lines the annals of the great Franciscan order. The third part of our book is, therefore, devoted to the history of the Institute from the departure of its founder to the present hour.

A few masterly pages from M^r d'Hulst form the vestibule of this threefold work in one, and considerably increase its value.

Such is the literary plan of the whole work; but now-a-days no work is complete without the adornment of a severe and abundant illustration, and we did not wish the life of Blessed de la Salle to appear bereft of this accompaniment.

This illustration is of two kinds. Artistic in the engravings outside the text, documentary in the others. We venture to call the attention of our readers to the latter, which demanded long and conscientious labor.

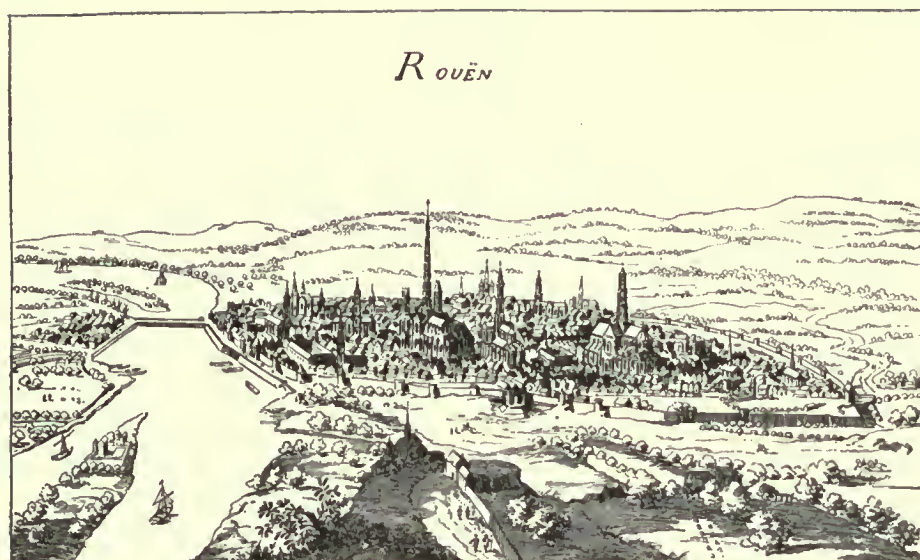
We hope that they contain all the documents relative to Blessed de la Salle, as well as those which concern his Institute and the schools. Few things could have been more difficult to illustrate than the first part of the work, which contains prints rare and difficult to find, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The second part presented fewer difficulties; but some pieces of special good luck befell it, such as the discovery of a new portrait of Blessed de la Salle, which will become the most precious element of an iconography as yet imperfect. In the third part, an attempt has been made to reproduce the two last centuries, from the portraits of the first successors of Blessed de la Salle to the types of scholars of the Christian schools in Burmah and Armenia at the present day, from the Bull of Benedict XIII. to the sketch of that magnificent retreat which the generosity of the Duchess de Galliera has provided for the veterans of the Institute.

This book makes its appearance in the midst of the radiant festivities which are being held in honor of the beatification of Blessed de la Salle. It has not their splendor; but we should like it to be their living continuation, and we desire, above all, that it may raise numerous imitators of Blessed de la Salle through centuries to come, for the greater honor of France, for the salvation of souls, and for the greater glory of God.

March 23th 1888, Feast of the Annunciation.

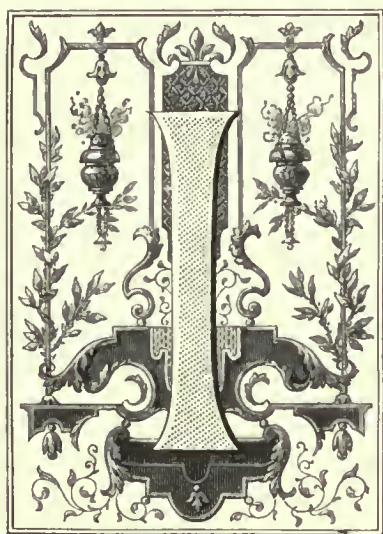


INTRODUCTION.



Rouen, where Blessed de la Salle died. — From a document in the print department of the National Library, Paris.

INTRODUCTION.



IL

T

It happens sometimes that man denies his immortality; he cannot help pursuing it. When he has shut out the perspective of the real immortality, he is compelled, as it were, to open another one in order to cheat his desires. To live again in the memory and in the admiration of his fellow-men, this is the hope that will console him, he fancies, for the great hope that he has lost—that of living eternally in the bosom of God.

But the promises of human glory are made up of a threefold lie.

In the first place, the after-life that it announces is a pure fiction. It ought to be the reward of the one who is gone, whereas it is only the amusement of those he has left behind him; the noise that is made over his name does not wake the

dead man in his tomb, nor give him back the power of enjoying praise.

Again, immortality is the dream, the need, the passionate desire of all men; glory is the privilege of a small number. For one satisfied ambition, how many disappointed ones there are! How many obscure destinies for one brilliant one!

Finally, and this is the last lie of glory, it promises enduring remembrance; but it cannot secure this. A few rare exceptions there are whose fame grows with the centuries, rising above the horizon of the past, as others decline and disappear. As a rule, glory has but a certain space of time, and when it has begun to fade, nothing can rekindle its lustre.

Thus, it is not with impunity that man spurns the immortality offered him by God. Heaven punishes the contempt of earth by giving up the impious man to the failure of his own experiments, and to the vanity of his own desires. But there is a striking contrast to this. There are men who, in order the better to honor God, have despised glory; they have gone even farther, they have hated it. They have been possessed by a strange and hitherto unknown passion, the passion of obscurity; this is saying too little: the passion of opprobrium and contempt. And what has been their fate? Shall we say that, in reward for their heroic renunciation, they have obtained Divine glory? This is not enough. God wishes over and above this to grant them that earthly glory which they sacrificed for His sake, and, in securing it to them, He frees it from those imperfect conditions which made it deceitful here below.

The human glory of the Saints is not a fiction, for their after-life in God makes them capable of enjoying it. It is not the privilege of genius, nor the capricious gift of chance; but the reward of a more perfect faithfulness. It is not, moreover, condemned to undergo the inflexible law of decline; a better law presides over its destiny, the law of Providential government. The Saints be-

come celebrated when their celebrity can serve the designs of God on His Church. Sometimes their memory springs at once to the summit of fame, and never descends from those heights. Sometimes it sleeps, as it were forgotten, until the day when its awakening can be of use; then humanity is seized with astonishment at its prolonged ingratitude towards those who, while they served God perfectly, deserved well of mankind. At other times again, after a luminous period, the star seems to grow pale, as if the new epoch had no need of its light; but a sudden storm arises, and then the star shines out and becomes a heavenly beacon to guide travellers through the darkness of trial.

Thus appears before us the sweet and radiant figure of him whom the Catholic world will henceforth style Blessed John Baptist de la Salle. During his life, no one turned their back on glory more persistently than he did; no one ever had their thirst for insult and contempt more abundantly satisfied than he. It may seem strange that we should seize upon this as the distinctive trait of a personage whose name, and whose work above all, are now so popular. Nevertheless, truth compels us to it. John Baptist de la Salle is a great man, undoubtedly, but he is great after the manner of the Saints. His wisdom is the folly of the cross. Like to that prudent architect of whom the Gospel speaks, he sat down before building his tower, and asked himself what resources he had in store to finish it. Humility then appeared to him as the instrument necessary for the service of the apostolate. To gain souls, to save the young, to renew Christian society from its base, to keep the preferences of his charity for the lowly ones and the forsaken—such was the dominant idea which took hold of the young Canon of Rheims, the idea which was destined to fashion his zeal and to be the powerful factor of his whole life. It was this idea which drew his sympathies to M. Nyel's first efforts, and soon after decided him to put his own hand to the arduous and much needed undertaking.

But what is this same undertaking, after all, but the very work of the Redeemer? Divine in its nature, it must be equally so in its means. And, therefore, man must disappear, to show God. The voluntary annihilation of the servant will leave the field free for the master's action. And thus is revealed to the holy priest, with the value of humility, that of humiliation which leads to it. In order to become the apostle of youth, he will be humble; and to become humble, he will accept, nay, he will seek humiliation.

In this respect, the life of the founder of the Christian schools has nothing to envy the most fervent lovers of abjection. Many Saints may have desired the contempt of the world as much as he did; I doubt if any of them ever obtained it in a manner so complete and so continuous. Others have passed through alternatives of glory and humiliation; for him, the humiliation was a thing of every day. It takes him at the opening of his career, when he resigns his canonry to devote himself to the founding of Christian schools, and it accompanies him to his death. Others have been despised by the wicked, and honored by the good; John Baptist de la Salle had the privilege of drawing upon himself and his work the blame and the severity of good men. What do I say? Humiliation is so thoroughly part of his vocation, that it comes to him from those even who esteem him, and at the very time when they are full of this esteem and veneration for him. Three eminent priests, celebrated for their piety and zeal, succeed each other in the presbytery of Saint Sulpice, in Paris; the first does all he can to entice the founder of the Brothers to his parish; the other two become patrons of his work, but all three want to substitute their direction for his, make him feel the weight of their authority, and end by repelling him personally in trying to separate him from his children. An Archbishop of Rouen, held in veneration for his great pastoral qualities, possesses in his diocese the Novitiate of the Brothers; he treats with contempt the man who caused the field of his Church to blossom forth with the virtues of a new

Thebaïd. A parish-priest of Rouen dares to accuse the holy man, already on the brink of the grave, of having told a lie; the accusation is believed, and the man of God is overwhelmed with contempt; a few days after, he dies, and the first exclamation of his slanderer is :— “ The Saint is dead ! ” He, therefore, looked upon him as a Saint when he slandered him? Mysterious permission of Providence!

But the contempt which comes to him from without is not enough; John Baptist de la Salle has yet to taste that other bitterness— the being despised by his own children! Many of his earliest sons betray him, serve the designs of his enemies, and end by going away from him, and breaking their vows. Amongst those who remain faithful to him, there are some who venerate him as a Saint, and never cease to treat him with irreverence. It looks as if this admirable man brings bad luck to the work he has founded. Wherever he plants it, a storm breaks out against himself personally, and seems to shake his work to pieces. After forty years of efforts, of prodigious labors, after miracles of virtue, penance and zeal, he leaves behind him an uncertain establishment, a contested Rule, a Congregation of middling importance. The last years of his life are so stamped with the seal of sufferings, that he feels it necessary to disappear for a time to hide himself from the eyes of all, to become invisible even to his own children, as if to turn aside from them the animosity of which he is the object. In this respect, his end resembles that of St Alphonsus Liguori, but with this difference : humiliation, for Alphonsus, succeeded to a long period during which he was universally respected, whereas, for the founder of the Brothers, it represents an unbroken web, and makes one with his whole life. This is, indeed, a strange preparation for glory.

Glory overtook him, nevertheless, promptly, brilliantly. Six years after the death of the man of God, his work obtained what he had not dared even to ask for it— Letters patent from the King,

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Glory overtook him, nevertheless, promptly, brilliantly. Six years after the death of the man of God, his work obtained what he had not dared even to ask for it— Letters patent from the King,

and a Bull of institution from the Holy See. The Society of schoolmasters was henceforth a Religious order recognized in the State and in the Church. The Novitiate of Saint Yon took a new development; resources multiplied without bringing relaxation in their wake, for they came according as they were needed, enough to favor the growth of the work, but in such a way as always to let the Brothers feel the sting of poverty. The eighteenth century was advancing rapidly towards that religious and social crisis which was to mark its close. Christian society was touched to the quick. The philosophers began a skilful war against the Church; a system of tactics is organized against that Church which, in civilizing the world, had put its seal on civilisation. While the Encyclopedists are striving to detach from her minds that were already mature, a still more dangerous conspiracy endeavors to snatch from her hands that key to souls, education. An illustrious Society, whose name personifies the alliance of religion and human culture, falls under the most tremendous moral assault that history records. The Holy See is overcome in its resistance, and the enemies of faith boast of having struck down Christian education in striking the Society of Jesus.

This is the moment when a new Institute carries this education down into the popular classes, and transforms into a collective and permanent effort attempts which had been hitherto isolated and intermittent. On the eve of the day when the people are to be saluted as "Sovereign," a disposition of Providence turns to the education of the people the attention of the pastors, which had been too long withdrawn from it, and puts into their hand, as a powerful weapon, a whole army of Christian masters. The name of John Baptist de la Salle is inseparable from the progress of this work. Thus did God give him glory.

If, however, the servant of God is glorified in his work, it does not at first seem as if he were to be so in his person. Of course, his memory remains in benediction with the religious family that

he founded. The remembrance of his heroic virtues, his prodigious penance, his spirit of prayer, of humility, of poverty, continue to inspire his children, and leave a perfume of sanctity in the souls of his contemporaries. But his name makes very little noise in the frivolous and troubled age that saw him depart hence.

When the storm of the Revolution burst, the holy founder revealed his influence with God by the grace of fidelity which he obtained for the members of his Institute. The Brothers, spared awhile, thanks to the popular nature of their self-devotion, were soon after carried away by the whirlwind. Even their lay character is overlooked, and the schismatic oath imposed upon the clergy is exacted from them. Torn from their schools, dispersed, despoiled, they hide their persevering vocation in out-of-the-way villages, devoting themselves to their noble mission as far as they can, while awaiting the day when they will be permitted to resume their community life. This is assuredly the merit of the sons, but it is also the glory of the fathers. The Saints alone can leave these vigorous stamps upon their work.

With the opening of the century came an unexpected revival in France of that religious life which ten years of war to the death had not killed in the heart of the nation.

In the affairs of education, as in those of worship, the Revolution left nothing but ruins. The Brothers were the first called back to restore popular education. The genius of Napoleon defended them against the silly prejudices of his councillors. Admitted to the privileges of the great teaching body that the Emperor was creating, they took at once a place in the public education of France which they have never ceased to fill with honor. It remained to a new race of Jacobins to drive them from it after eighty years of peaceful and beneficent possession. During this period, the Institute had spread abroad; it follows the march of the apostolate in distant countries; it preserves the traditions of Christian France in the East, and, by its patriotic services, commands the respect and even the

protection of those who are persecuting it in the mother-country. Here again, the blessed founder is glorified in his work.

If the work could grow thus without calling public attention to the workman, is it not time we should give up the hope of ever seeing John Baptist de la Salle popular, like his Institute? Yes, if his fame depended solely on the laws which control human celebrities; but here we shall see how God disposes according to his good pleasure of the remembrance of men.

The filial piety of the Brothers never neglected the memory of their father. Before the end of the eighteenth century, under the generalship of Brother Agathon, steps were taken to introduce the cause of Abbé de la Salle's beatification. We are not aware of the obstacles which prevented the affair from succeeding. The documents which might have thrown light on the subject were destroyed in the Revolution. Perhaps God did not choose that the age of Voltaire and Jansenism should have the unmerited honor of proclaiming the glory of Saints whose work and example were bequeathed to it by the foregoing age. Whatever be the reason, the fact remains that while the founder of the Brothers died in the first quarter of the last century (1719), the first reading of his cause belongs to the first half of this one (1834). These proceedings, so long delayed, were destined to advance very slowly, even in our time. A decree of the Holy See, given in 1840, bestowed on the founder of the Brothers the title of Venerable. More than thirty years later, in 1873, another decree proclaimed his virtues heroic. It is only since then that the cause progressed rapidly, thanks to the initiative of Brother Philip, of holy memory, and the particular interest which the immortal Pius IX. took in it. Finally, the Jubilee year of Leo XIII. sees it triumphantly finished with that of a contemporary of Blessed de la Salle, who was like him the founder of an Institution for Christian education¹.

¹ Blessed Grignon de Montfort, founder of the Sisters of Wisdom.

We find, therefore, four periods of very unequal length, in the history of the posthumous honor paid to this man who was so persistently humiliated.

From the time of his death to the Revolution, his work grew and prospered, winning the sympathy and esteem of everybody—but, externally at least, people busied themselves not at all concerning the person of the founder.

From the restoration of public worship to 1834, the work continues to rise from its ruins. Issued from an idea of faith, the Institute of the Brothers appears to modern France as the useful auxiliary of the purely philanthropical zeal that it professes for popular education. Both sides desire the same thing, though not from the same motives; they pursue the same object without being animated by the same spirit. Is there any reason to wonder if a certain indifference surrounds the memory of the holy priest?

But the Brothers have not forgotten the counsel of the prophet :—“ *Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you are dug out*’.” They know that all good things come to them through their holy founder with the grace of their vocation, and they suffer from not being able to give utterance in public worship to the sentiments of veneration with which the sublimity of his example inspires them. To Brother Anaclet, tenth successor of Blessed de la Salle, is due the honor of having inaugurated the third period, the one which extends from the introduction of the cause to the decree given in 1873 on the heroic character of his virtues. The work seemed at first to be going on satisfactorily; less than six years after the first steps were taken, the title of Venerable bestowed on their Father rejoiced the hearts of his sons, and lifted up their hopes. Then, everything came to a stand-still. This was, nevertheless, the period of the Institute’s greatest expansion. The government of July, not-

¹ *Attendite ad petram unde excisi estis, et ad cavernam laci de qua præcisi estis.*
(Is. LI, 4.)

withstanding some opposition, is favorable to its development; M. Guizot gives it a considerable share in the application of the law of 1833. The Republic of 1848 is in entire sympathy with these true friends of the people. The law of 1850 quickens their progress. Under the Second Empire, the struggle begins, first underhand, but more and more openly by degrees; the programme of secularization is sketched out in the councils of the Sovereign, and it soon reveals itself with a growing audacity; but the Brothers still keep the public schools, and find their best defence in their success. The system of fierce competition, invented by the patrons of secularization, turns to the glory of the Christian schools, whose continued triumphs paralyse the ill-will of their enemies.

Dragged into this pedagogical strife by the necessity to live, compelled to fight for their privilege of doing good in the midst of a competition that gave no truce, the Brothers did not lose sight of the great affair going on in Rome for the glorification of their founder. Perhaps they felt less free to promote its progress. But above all, Providence was holding in reserve for a period of more deadly and decisive warfare the supernatural help which the beatification of Blessed de la Salle was to afford to their zeal.

The Empire falls, France is overpowered. Defeat, invasion, civil war, all seem to combine for the consummation of her ruin. Suddenly, a wave of faith and patriotism sweeps over the country; power passes into the most honest, if not the ablest, hands; it looks for a moment, as if we were on the eve of a great regeneration, and we see the inspiration of religion in all the deeds of national life. How could the Brothers, to whom our disasters afforded fresh opportunities of self-sacrifice, fail to follow the impulse which was impelling the soul of France to supernatural preoccupations? This is the fourth period which opens for the memory of their founder. The decree of 1873 made the cause take an onward step, and this progressive movement was not to

be slackened until the decree of beatification promulgated by Leo XIII.

And then? Has France persevered in the road that leads back to God? Far from it! Never did she pledge herself more freely to those who are luring her to apostasy. A dreadful reaction brought into power not this or that enemy of the Church, but the very sect that has sworn to do away with Christianity. It is no longer a question of substitution of persons; it is a question of the advent of a programme, and this programme is political only in name; its true object is the annihilation of Christian influence in society. The most irreconcilable factions agree on this word of command; the most hostile hands are clasped for this common work; the incompetent become clever in the service of this design, the busy-bodies grow discreet, the undisciplined obedient, and the plan of the destroyer unfolds itself *slowly but surely*, under an anonymous but ceaseless guidance, which knows how to join hypocrisy to cynicism.

A word was found. A word is a great thing; it goes very far in leading those who do not understand facts : secularization (*laïcité*). This word serves those in quest of votes as a compendious profession of faith. And why should it not gain them a hearing? To be secular, is not to belong to the clergy. All whom the candidates address are secular : — “ Do you wish to be governed by the priests? ” they ask. — “ No, ” answer the great number; “ we will belong to you. ” — “ Then, you are for secularization? ” — “ Yes, of course. ” — “ Very good; then vote for us. ” And forthwith the successful candidates go to work to fulfil their mandate. The school must be secularized; and straightway the Brothers, the Sisters, the best friends of the people are sent away. “ But that is not what we wanted, ” cry the good folk. “ My friends, it is secularization. ” — Then the books are to be secularized. “ What! The name of God is still to be found in some pages of books! Make haste, and strike it out, whether the page be signed by the good

La Fontaine, or the immense Hugo. " — " But it is ridiculous to mutilate the language in this fashion! " — " Secularization will have it so. " — The Tribunal must be secularized. The image of Christ presides over debates where the interests and the life of men are at stake. The perjurer was wont to tremble, and stand arrested before that figure; but the atheist declared that it hampered his conscience, so the Crucifix was cast out of the pretorium. — The hospital was next to be secularized. — " But, wretched man, it is the asylum of suffering! Will you banish consolation from it? Will you hand over the poor to the harshness of a mercenary service? " — " What does this matter provided secularization carries the day? " Such is the reign that has flourished for the last ten years.

They reckoned without the virtue of the Gospel, which strengthens the persecuted. "*When I am weak, then am I strong*!." So spoke St Paul. If we take away human resources from the children of the Church, we compel them to have recourse to the folly of the Cross: — *Factus sum insipiens, vos me coegistis*¹. An immense effort of faith, charity and sacrifice was destined to raise up Christian schools everywhere under the auspices of liberty. The Brothers are no longer to be the interpreters of public teaching, but they will be more than ever the dispensers of Christian teaching. In order to be equal to this task, however, and to fill without faltering this new career of sacrifice, they must draw more deeply from supernatural sources. The successors of Brother Philip understood the signs of the times. If Brother John Olympe only passes through the generalship, his prayers and his example will give to the Institute an impulse that will precipitate its advance in the path traced out by its founder. Brother Irlide takes the work in hand, and dies under the burden. Brother Joseph takes up the precious inheritance. Amidst the cares of an admi-

¹ II Cor. xii, 10. = ² *Ibid.*, 11.

nistration harassed by difficulties that increased daily, these two Superiors made the spiritual culture of their subjects their first and chief business. The work of the preparatory Novitiate, so dear to the founder, revives and grows under the patronage of his name. Before taking the habit as a novice, the future Christian school-master had already received the spirit of religious perfection. Every step he takes in the career will be marked by a new initiation. Ordinary retreats are not enough. The Religious, already well versed in the duties of his vocation, is frequently called aside into solitude to renew his fervor. Sometimes, before the great profession, he will go through the vigorous discipline of the Spiritual Exercises of thirty days; sometimes,—and there is a great future in store for this institution,—the professed Religious goes to seek in a second novitiate of three months a more perfect acquaintance with the duties of the religious life. Oh, ye who thought to kill the Christian school, ye have labored un-awares at its regeneration!

What is this perfecting of the work, if not an inspiration of its founder? When we see his sons possessed more than ever by the supernatural ideas with which he was filled, must we not recognize that something great is going to befall his Institute? Can we wonder if his memory becomes more present to all their hearts, and that entreaties are more urgent in hastening the progress of his cause? God could not remain deaf to these pious longings. The Roman suit is hurried to its completion, the miracles exacted by the prudence of the Holy See come victoriously out of the most rigorous examinations. The beatification of Blessed de la Salle is to be the reward, as it was one of the causes of the great effort after sanctification which made the sons worthy of their father.

Were we wrong in saying at the beginning : Here is a march of events which contradicts the laws of history? Here is a glory which after more than a hundred and sixty years renews its lustre. Here is an artisan who seemed to be almost eclipsed by his work

and who, in the perfecting of this work under the strokes of trial, finds a new celebrity. The finger of God was there, and it behoved us first to show it.

It now remains to us to point out the consequences of the pontifical deed which raises the founder of the Christian schools to the altars. This elevation crowns the glory of the humble priest; it opens a new source of benefits to contemporary society.

It is, in the first place, a glorification which surpasses all human means. The humility of the workman made the fecundity of the work, a fecundity as supernatural as the source whence it springs. Here, in his turn, the workman finds the measure of his glory. The voice of the Vicar of Jesus Christ holds up Blessed de la Salle to the homage, the confidence, the invocation of his sons. But these sons are everywhere. There are first those twelve thousand Religious all over the world, from Paris to New York, from Madrid to Constantinople, from London to Hong-Kong, dispensing Christian teaching; there are then those three thousand novices, in the mother-house and the preparatory novitiates, who have placed their budding vocations under the patronage of the holy founder; there are lastly those three hundred thousand pupils and groups of young men, those associations of prayer and zeal which supply the schools and the works of the Brothers with their innumerable clients. These make many voices. And henceforth all will proclaim the glory of him whom they now call Blessed :— *Beatum me dicent omnes generationes*. Praise, gratitude, prayer, will ascend from every part of the globe to him who on earth sought and found nothing but obscurity. The Church, assuredly, knows how to glorify her Saints.

More than this — the glory she confers is not, like human glory, an empty noise, a barren light. In multiplying the honors rendered to the Saints of God, she multiplies their benefits to men. The principal effect of the beatification of a founder is to give to his work a new consecration which strengthens it. The good it

does then spreads to the great benefit of society. Let us consider the exaltation of Blessed de la Salle from this point of view.

Above all, it is a moral benefit, the benefit of example. The glory of the holy priest is the reward of his sacrifice; and what was the nature of this sacrifice? One word suffices to define it—it was the sacrifice of self to the good of the lowly. This is the great lesson that our age stands in need of. Never, perhaps, was the cause of the people, the disinherited ones, so loudly pleaded; never was the pretended injustice of social inequality denounced more pompously; never was the power of education to raise the condition of the lowly more proudly vaunted. But who is it that makes these fine speeches? Ambitious men and egotists, who only flatter the people to make use of them, who only stigmatise riches in order to push up to the places where they can be most easily acquired, who only cry up science to give weight to the false promises with which they beguile the multitude. This is how fame and fortune are made; the public conscience is shaken by these things; it wants to be steadied by pure and grand examples, which will restore their true meaning to words, and place before its eyes the image of real self-sacrifice. This is the salutary work which the Pope has just achieved. We must recognize in it this first benefit.

The second is more apparent—it is a powerful encouragement given to the most important work of our day, free Christian education.

John Baptist de la Salle had already in the past deserved well of the community. When popular education was the object of every one's desire, but while various efforts in many places were paralysed by innumerable obstacles, it was he who received from God, with the mission, the grace to succeed where so many others had failed. It was he who took in hand the hardest part of the task, the instruction of little boys, leaving to others the easier work of teaching girls. He was the first who formed, not a local,

ephemeral association, but a permanent and universal society of Christian teachers, bound by vow to the most ungrateful as well as the most useful of labors. If we would measure the extent of this social benefit, we must not look merely at the Institute founded by Blessed de la Salle, important as that is; we must add to this the sum total of good accomplished by so many other congregations of Brothers whom the sons of Blessed de la Salle look upon, not as rivals, but as fellow-workers, whose rules and traditions are borrowed chiefly from the foundation of the Canon of Rheims. Even the Congregations of women are indebted to him, many of them owing their existence to that great movement of popular education which he inaugurated.

This is what the past owes to Blessed de la Salle. The future will owe him still more. His elevation will multiply Christian schools, the great want of our age. These schools can only be opened and kept open to-day under the auspices of liberty, and by the virtue of sacrifice. In proportion as an impious society the more determinately separates religion from education, the closer becomes the bond between these two forces in the heart of Christian society, and from this one other unions and reconciliations result.

The popular school has nothing to depend upon in our days but alms, and it is the same impulse of faith which bids the poor men choose the Christian schools for his son, and prompts the rich man to secure the benefit of it to both. Nevertheless the fidelity of the poor in clinging to the Christian schools, and the generosity of the rich in keeping them up, cannot with their combined strength hold out against the overpowering competition of the impious schools, richly endowed as they are at the expense of the rate-payers. Good masters, carefully trained to their work, are the essential need, masters initiated daily to the progress of the methods, capable, in a word, of justifying by the fruits of their teaching the confidence that has been placed in them. Primary,

technical and professional education : all this the Christian schools must be able to provide; they must assume every form in order to satisfy the demands of a society ceaselessly striving after material improvement. If that society commits the grievous fault of losing sight of moral improvement, the Christian schools are there to repair the guilty omission; but, in order to obtain influence for this essential part of their mission, they must prove themselves the successful rivals of the Godless schools.

There is, therefore, no denying it : the moral and social future of our country depends on the development of the Christian schools; but the excellence of the masters constitutes the first condition of the development of these schools. In order to secure these masters, the Church addresses herself to the Congregations—she finds them always ready to follow her appeal, and first in the order of popular teaching comes the Institute of Blessed de la Salle. First by the number of its members, by the importance and variety of its establishments, by the value of its methods, it serves as an example and an encouragement to others, it precedes and accompanies them on the road of an enlightened self-sacrifice which draws its inspiration from love of souls, but whose success pedagogical knowledge alone can ensure. If this army of school-masters had not stood ranged in battle at the moment when, first Belgium, and then France, saw the constituted authorities driving out religion from the schools, it was all over with Christian education in both countries.

“ What should we have done without the Brothers ? ” said the venerable Cardinal Guibert a few days before his death. These few words express the feeling of all who are interested in our schools, of all those who are not indifferent to the spiritual fate of the children of the people, that is to say of all Christians. And because the glorification of the holy founder of the Brothers promises to his Institute and to all similar congregations an interior renovation of piety and zeal, an exterior increase of importance

and prosperity, because of this, all the children of God rejoice, and thank the Head of the Church for having given this encouragement to their charity, for having laid in the bosom of a work, necessary above all others, this new germ of supernatural vitality. All feel strengthened by this striking homage paid to the maternal solicitude of the Church. In the teeth of the insolent pretensions of a society that boasts of having erected general education on the ruins of superstition, it is good to see placed on high the majestic figure of the man who, one hundred years before the French Revolution, drew from his faith the inspiration of the great work of popular education; who stooped to lift up, and cherish, and instruct the poor man's child fifty years before Voltaire doomed him to "a spur and hay." Twelve years ago, the city of Rouen saw a statue of the holy founder rise on one of its public squares. To-day a more stupendous and enduring monument is erected to his memory by the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff. No place, no time will hold captive this glory which has been consecrated by him whose decrees are ratified by Christ in heaven.

This glorification is an act of justice. It re-establishes the rights of history; it avenges worthily the Christian masters, basely slandered by malignant hate. It rewards their benefactors for the sacrifices of which they have been so lavish. It consoles all the children of the Church in the bitterness of the trials through which they are passing. It brings them the hope of a brighter future: the reign of iniquity does not last for ever.

M. D'HULST,

Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris

BOOK THE FIRST

PRIMARY EDUCATION

BEFORE

THE TIME OF BLESSED DE LA SALLE



Rheims, birthplace of Blessed de la Salle. — Old houses on the Market-Place.
— Drawn by Hubert Clerget, engraved by Méanille.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINTS IN HISTORY; MISSION OF BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.



ALL the day ever come when history will be written by the lives of the Saints, not merely the religious history of souls, but the political history of peoples, whose true leaders have been the Saints? For it is the Saints, and the Saints only, who see through the affairs of this world; it is they whose words, once uttered, keep on reverberating for ever; whose passage amongst men is not obliterated by the ever-moving wave of time; the

Saints, and the Saints only, realize fully the designs of Providence on this world.

Instead of working on the outside, the Saints work within. They transform souls : first, their own, then, by their example, the souls around them, and finally, by their writings, those of generations yet unborn, thus exercising an undying influence on civilization.

Is it possible to ignore these great principles in France? Is there any other principle that can lead us through the maze of those facts that make up our national history? At every epoch, a Saint appears, and rises above his contemporaries: he sees farther than they do; he judges all things from a higher stand-point. A strange blessing follows upon his every word and action. When time has swept away the achievements of his contemporaries, his works remain, and contribute to the greatness of his country. The history of Christian France begins with St Denis, and is carried on uninterruptedly to our day. We have first the Martyrs, who plant the faith with their blood; the Doctors, who defend it by their writings; the Solitaries, who go forth into the desert to practice its precepts and its counsels. In the fourth century, St Martin evangelizes the semi-barbarous people around him, and astonishes them by his miracles. In the fifth century, St Geneviève saves this same people by her prayers. Then Clovis advances with his Franks, and his wife, a saint, converts him; a saintly Bishop baptizes him, and with him his whole army. Thus was born France, the great Christian nation, and the sign of the sacrament will never disappear from her brow. Innumerable Saints soon arise on all sides, like so many new stars in the firmament : saintly Bishops, founders of dioceses; saintly Monks, whose cells are destined to be the cradles of many of our towns; saintly Virgins and Widows, whose traditions are as the fountain whence the women of France have ever since drawn their virtues. Here, we have St Gregory of Tours, who writes the first Christian annals of the nation; there we see St Radegonde, the great Queen of the sixth century, who casts off the royal purple to clothe herself in the monastic habit; in the seventh century, we have St Eloi, St Owen, St Faron, St Leger, ministers and councillors of Kings, and after them

St Bathilde, the slave who became a Queen, and the Queen who became a Saint.



Blessed John Baptist de la Salle. — Statue of Oliva, in the court-yard of the mother-house of Paris.
— Drawn by Edouard Garnier, engraved by Chapon.

Then comes the age of Charlemagne, and the heroic foundations of a Christian constitution are laid in Europe. In the tenth century, when the Carlovingian royalty is crumbling to pieces, Odilon,

Abbot and law-maker of Cluny, is raising monasteries where whatsoever deserves not to perish of the civilization of that period will be preserved. In the eleventh century, we see St Bruno choosing the mountain solitudes of Grenoble in preference to the canonry of Rheims. In the twelfth century stands forth St Bernard, the apostle of the Crusades, to be followed in the thirteenth by St Louis, the ideal type of the Christian King, and the patron of French royalty.

It would be impossible to enumerate the names and the works of all the Saints of France. Open our national history at every page, and in every century you will find the Saint that has stamped it with the seal of his genius and his virtues. And outside these giants, the lustre of whose fame defies alike the ingratitude of mankind and the hatred of the ungodly, we find a countless multitude of obscure labourers whose names are known only to God. The work they did is forgotten, but the result of that work remains. Faith had to be dropped seed by seed into souls. For this, thousands of sowers were needed, and they were found, and sent forth scattering the seed, and transmitting their unfinished task from generation to generation; some working singly under the inspiration of grace, others working in groups; some devoting themselves to evangelizing the poor, others to nursing the sick, others again to teaching the children of the people. Those who wanted help called in their brethren, who answered the appeal, and modestly set to do the task allotted them, accepting direction. Thus were founded those innumerable religious families who, despite a hundred years of revolution and persecution, are still ploughing and tilling the soil of France.

We are about to relate the origin of one of those religious families, one of the humblest in its aim, one of the most powerful by its works: that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Its founder was a Saint; we may not, it is true, as yet confer that title upon him absolutely; but the process of his canonization, still pending, has proclaimed his virtues heroic, and we therefore hope to see him soon placed by the Church upon her altars.



Peint par P. Léger

Gravé par Manigaud



Blessed de la Salle is one of the great figures of his time. He was born at the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV. Just as the King was at the zenith of his glory, Blessed de la Salle was preparing in silence and retirement the work whose future development he was assuredly far from fore-seeing. The foundations of it were laid in the very year when the King, blinded by pride, was contesting the privileges of the Sovereign Pontiff. A humble priest had set his heart and mind on teaching the Christian doctrine to the people just when the rulers of the people were beginning to forget or to deny its most vital truths. While the Revolution, which was to overturn the throne, was steadily advancing, this obscure priest was building up with his strong hands another monument which, to this very hour, has defied the Revolution itself, and continues to shelter thousands of children, and to teach them to know God and to love France.

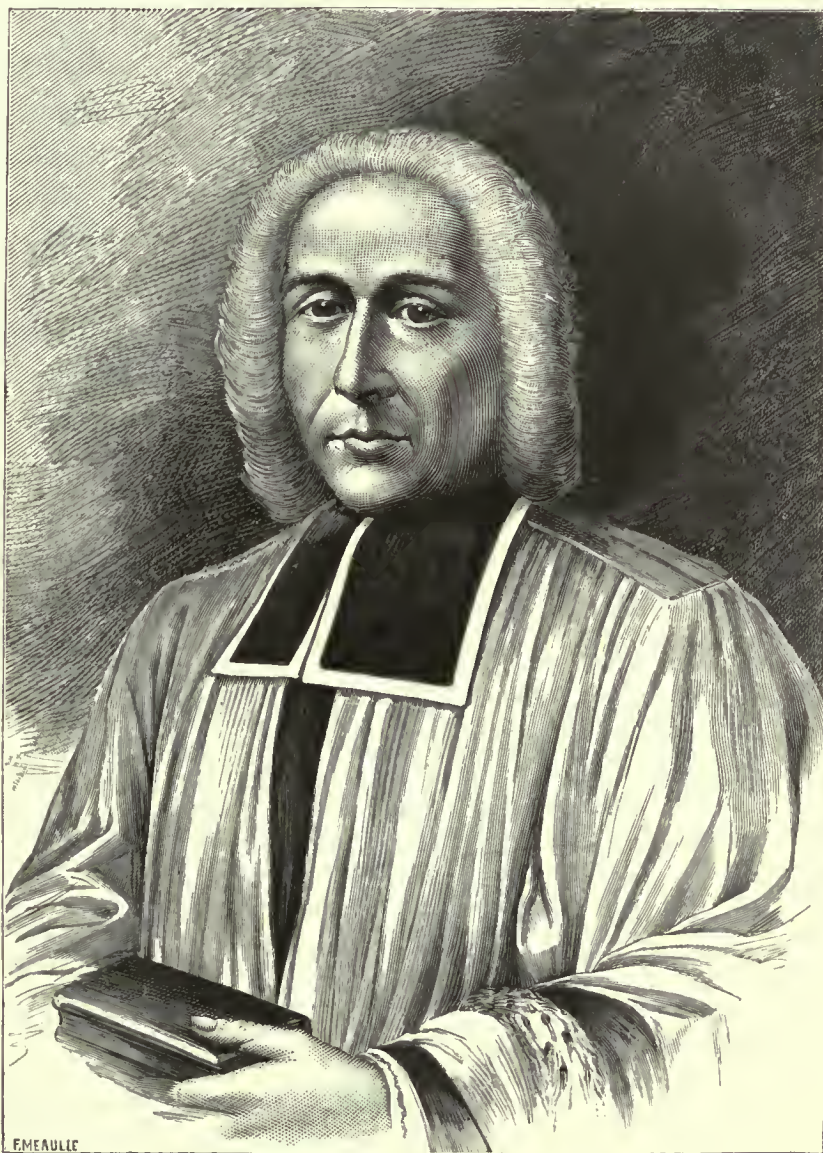
We see around us men who are loudly proclaiming the right of the State to bring up children and to impose its own teaching on them, in spite of their parents, in spite of the Church. One would fancy, to hear them, that they first invented schools, that hitherto the people have grown up in dense ignorance, and now, for the first time, are having a book put into their hands. This is one of those monstrous and absurd calumnies that it behoves us to fight against. Even in minds that pass for enlightened, we are constantly coming upon errors which must be refuted, not by words, but by actions. We are called upon to prove, for instance, that, long before the State gave a thought to the subject, the Church was actively devoting herself to the education of the children of the people. We must prove to demonstration that the Church had opened schools, drawn up plans, written books, dictated statutes, founded institutions, formed teachers, and created in all its parts that system of popular education, the initiative of which her adversaries would now fain attribute to themselves. These innovators are simply plagiarists. They are vaunting as their own invention what has been practised by the Church for centuries past; and it would be easy to prove,

as we shall do later on, that the only effect of their intervention in these works has been to check their development.

It is impossible to mention popular education without the name of Blessed de la Salle at once presenting itself to our mind. Like Christopher Columbus, he belongs to a new world. He too was an explorer. It was his glory to discover in the unreclaimed solitudes of our society whole populations that were plunged in the darkest ignorance, savage tribes of another sort who had to be led out into the light. There were, of course, schools before his time, and there are other schools of a later date that were not founded by him; but he is none the less the central luminary of popular education, the architect appointed by God to build that portion of his Church. Before his time we see zealous workmen, but labouring without unity; snatching isolated souls from ignorance, but not attempting to rescue the masses. Those who came after him borrowed his ideas, and adopted his plans. All the popular schools spread over the face of Europe are modelled on the type he created, and all that is best in our educational laws is but an imperfect imitation of his rules. He was the first to gather school-masters about him, and he cast them into a mould which was none other than that of evangelical perfection. He requires that they renounce their name, their family, their fortune, even their will, in order to give themselves up more completely to childhood. Before presenting these precepts to them, he puts them in practice himself. In order to enter the Church, he renounces the honors of the world, where his birth and his talents prepared him an enviable place. Even in the Church, he flies from the honors that pursue him, and chooses in their stead this despised calling. First, canon of Rheims, then a humble school-master, he eventually becomes the head of a family which reckons innumerable children, and spreads its powerful branches over the whole world.

He was the first to found elementary pedagogical teaching. He constituted himself the law-maker of that mutinous little people who, while still lacking the reason of men, have all their

passions. He mingled in wise proportions piety and science, wisdom and strength, rewards and punishments, and drew up a



Canon Blain, first historian of Blessed de la Salle, whose narrative serves as the basis of this history.
— Engraving of Méaulle, from a contemporary print.

constitution so perfect, that it has stood for two hundred years without undergoing any notable modification. He found out and imparted to others the secret of conveying the first rudiments of knowledge to the most rebellious minds; he discovered and im-

parted the far more difficult art of conquering the most indocile natures, and melting the hardest hearts.

He was the first to write for ignorant little children. This learned Doctor, this theologian, contemporary of Bossuet and Fénelon, does not disdain to draw up and correct Alphabets, Catechisms, Manuals of Christian politeness— the smallest and humblest class-books of the poor man's child, but at the same time books that were destined to reckon hundreds of editions and millions of readers, and to exercise the mightiest influence on universal civilization.

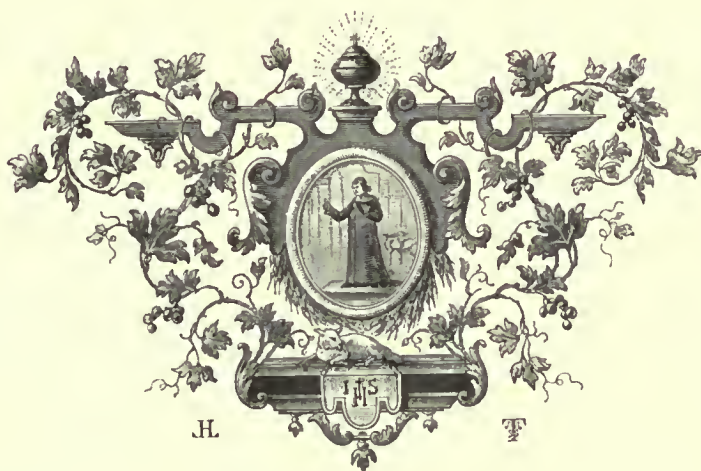
He was the first to make French the basis of primary education, and he thus contributed largely to the knowledge and spread of the national tongue. In prohibiting the study of Latin to his disciples, he binds them for ever to the primary schools, and prevents these from eventually transforming themselves into colleges, and so once more leaving the people without educational establishments. He is, therefore, the creator, the true creator, of that primary education that we hear so much cried up in our own day. And he is at the same time its organizer. The greater part of the laws that govern it have been borrowed from his conceptions and his rules. He found these by intuition, he put them on trial, and they developed more or less, according to the intelligence of his contemporaries, whom his genius outstripped.

He was the first to found, not only schools, but a teaching body of Christian masters, novitiates to train them, authorities to guide them, asylums to receive them when failing health no longer permitted them to work. To these principal foundations, he adds schools for children whose families cannot keep them at home; reformatories for bad children; Sunday schools for children in workshops, and finally seminaries for lay-masters, types of our future Normal schools. In fact, he endowed France with a sort of primary University, complete in all its parts, and anticipating by two hundred years that of our time, which it surpasses in perfection. Not alone has he given schools to France, but his disciples have given them to the whole world, thus assuring to

his country that glory of which all the Christian nations are jealous.

Such is the man whose history we have undertaken to write.

His gentle and majestic figure stands out at the close of the seventeenth century. He crowns its splendour by works purer in the sight of the Church than those of Bossuet, more lasting than the conquests of Louis XIV., and he opens that eighteenth century which, but for him and his spiritual children, would have proved still more fatal to the good and the true. The schools that he founded are so many lightning-conductors which have preserved French society from complete and irreparable ruin. He saved France, and it is the duty of France to express to him her deep and enduring gratitude.

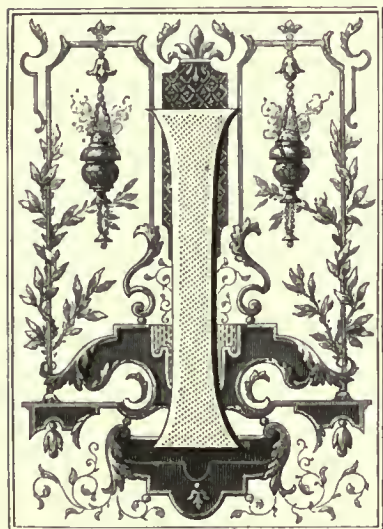




Paris, seat of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools founded by Blessed de la Salle.
In the back-ground, Notre-Dame, whose Chapter held full authority over the schools.
— Drawn by Huhert Clerget, engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND IN PARTICULAR THOSE OF PARIS.



IN order thoroughly to understand the mission of Blessed de la Salle, it is necessary to know what the education of the people was at the period when he founded his Institute; a brief sketch of its history will not, therefore, be out of place here. This will enable us to see what the Church had done before his time, what yet remained to be done, and thus we shall understand at a glance the facilities and the obstacles which the ancient institutions brought to the new foundation.

Schools are as old as the Church. She received from her Divine Founder the command to teach, and she has ever obeyed it zeal-

ously; in all ages, she has taught the elders and the little ones, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. The depository of truth, she spreads it abundantly all over the world, and adapts it to the intelligence of those whom she addresses. But, following the example of Him who said— "Suffer little children to come unto me," the lowly ones are the scholars that she loves best. The evangelization of the poor is one of the signs of the mission of the Church. She has never forgotten this duty, and the history of schools for the children of the people, if it were complete, would begin with the very origin of Christianity.

The instruction of childhood is the never-failing means employed by the Church to carry the light of Christian truth and morality into the midst of nations. It is the weapon used by every missionary, whether he is evangelizing Denmark in the ninth century¹, or preaching to the savages of central Africa in our own day.

To found schools: such was the great work undertaken by the first bishops of Gaul. From the council of Vaison, which, in 529, requests the pastors of all the parishes to receive young men into their houses, and educate them, in order to prepare for themselves worthy successors, innumerable orders of the same kind emanate from the inspired lips of the heads of the Church.

Without stopping to recall the Capitularies with which an ardent faith inspired Charlemagne in 789 and Louis le Débonnaire in 823, we may mention the command laid by Theodulfus in 797 on all the priests of his diocese to give instructions gratis to the children of the hamlets and villages. That famous decree of the Bishop of Orléans had such weight that, a century later, the Bishop of Verceil² reproduced it verbatim. The councils of Châlons and Mayence in 813, the bishops of Amiens towards 811, of Rheims in 852, of Tours in 858, imitate this noble example, and are actively engaged in organizing schools in all the parishes.

There are four kinds of schools: those where the country parish-

¹ *Annales ordinis sancti Benedicti*, t. II, p. 501. = ² Migne, *Patrologie latine*, t. CXXXIV, p. 40.

priests¹ had the village children taught gratuitously, and instructed in the first rudiments of the faith; those of the bishoprics and the abbeys where a higher education was given, and which would seem to have been more specially adapted to young clerical scholars, and children destined to ecclesiastical dignities; finally, the school of the palace, which was established in the very palace of the Emperor, who called thither the most learned men of his empire, and took part himself in their labors.

The documents to which we have referred dwell chiefly on the necessity for securing the instruction of clerical students, and point especially to secondary education; but as the Abbé Allain² shrewdly remarks, such a diffusion of literary studies suggests that the young men's minds had already received some elementary culture. It is hardly necessary to say here that later all the colleges of the various towns in France had schools³ for the younger children attached to them. And there can be little doubt but that this was always the case.

Even if the character of the schools had been purely ecclesiastical, they would none the less have had a deep and salutary effect upon the people, for they were open to children of all conditions.

The description of the Abbey lands of St Victor, at Marseilles, drawn up in 814, contains frequent mention of the sons of farmers who were then in the school⁴, and the terms of the council of Vaison and of the council of Limoges, in 1031⁵, tend to prove that the hypothesis of a student refusing to embrace the priesthood, after having profited by the teaching of the schools, was fully admitted. Neither must we imagine that the schools attached to the country churches of this period were simply seminaries. Little girls frequented them, and the Bishop of Soissons, in 889, orders that they be kept apart from the boys⁶.

¹ Choron (2^d fascic., p. 13 et 61) quotes two texts where Flodoard speaks of the school kept by the parish-priest in the village of Gernicourt, and by a cleric in the village of Bazoches. = ² *L'Instruction primaire en France avant la Révolution*, Paris, in-18, 1881, p. 23. = ³ Buisson, p. 2751, *Collège de Montfort-l'Amaury au xvi^e siècle*. = ⁴ Guérard, *Cartulaire de Saint-Victor*, t. II, p. 634 and following. = ⁵ Buisson, p. 1594. = ⁶ Constitution of Riculfus, art. xvi.; Choron, 2^d fascic., p. 62.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, during the invasions of the Normans, a great many schools were destroyed in France, and writing had become a lost art amongst laymen. When our fathers wanted to draw out maps, they had recourse to the science of the monks and the clerical students, and there was a class of scribes who made a livelihood by going to fairs and markets, and drawing up contracts of sale and barter¹.

But, meanwhile, the Church was not slumbering. Even throughout this stormy period, there were schools; we come upon them everywhere. There was a girls' school at Pont-de-l'Arche in 1016, and a boys' school two years later². Guibert de Nogent assures us that schools which, in his youth, had fallen into complete decay, gained a new life at the beginning of the twelfth century. It was no longer in the monasteries alone that children were taught to write on tablets overlaid with wax³; in the towns, they were sent to school at eight years of age—

Quant ot xii ans, moult fu biax bachelier
Et à l'acolle fu bien quatre ans passez⁴—...

Old documents have preserved traces of the establishments devoted to the instruction of childhood at Brie in 1096, at Pornic in 1113, at Ferté-Gaucher in 1147, at Braine in 1173, at Gisors in 1180, at Mézières in 1188, and lastly at Soissons, where the school was kept by a Sister⁵.

At the third Council of Lateran, which was held in 1179, under Pope Alexander III., the following decree was solemnly proclaimed, and shed everywhere a great light:— "The Church of God, being, like a good and tender mother, obliged to provide for the spiritual and corporal wants of the poor, is desirous of procuring for children destitute of pecuniary resources the means of learning to read and of advancing in the study of letters, and ordains that

¹ Bibl. nat., lat. 3238, f° 71, v°. = ² Buisson, p. 2111. = ³ Orderic Vital, l. III, chap. vii. Cf. Léon Gautier, *la Chevalerie*, p. 145, n. 2. = ⁴ "When he had attained his twelfth year he was a full-blown bachelor... and had passed four years at school." Bibl. nat., fr. 19160, f° 3. Cf. *la Chevalerie*, p. 144. = ⁵ Buisson, pp. 108, 279, 2111; Choron, 3^e fascie., pp. 17, 19, 67.

every cathedral church shall have a master who will instruct gratis the ecclesiastical students of that church and the poor scholars, and that a grant be assigned him which, by sufficing for his maintainance, will thus open the door of the school to studious



E. GARNIER del.

F. CABARTEUX sc.

St Nicholas, patron of scholars during the Middle Ages and one of the Saints most in honor in the Institute of the Brothers.
— Drawn by Edouard Garnier, taken from a document in the Priest department of the National Library;
engraved by F. Cabarteux.

youths. A free school shall be re-opened in the other churches and monasteries where there formerly existed funds for this purpose.

Nobody shall exact any remuneration, either for the licence to teach, or for the exercise of teaching, even if his right should be based on custom; and the licence to keep a school shall not be

refused to any person who can justify his capacity for it. Offenders shall be deprived of their ecclesiastical living, for "it is meet that, in the Church of God, he who hinders the progress of the churches by selling, from cupidity, the permission to teach, should be himself deprived of the fruit of his labor."

The fourth Lateran Council, held in 1215, under Innocent III, renewed these noble decrees, which were carried out, as far as the wars and disturbances of those troubled periods permitted it. Already, in 1176, William, Archbishop of Sens, keeping zealous guard over the right methods, forbade grammar schools, or schools for singing and for psaltery, without the permission of the precentor¹. In 1235, Pierre de Colmieu, Archbishop of Rouen, issued a decree whereby priests were bade "to frequently warn their parishioners to have their children carefully instructed, and to see that they attended school assiduously." On the other hand, the synodal statutes of Troyes, first drawn up at this period, are equally urgent with the faithful concerning the instruction of their children². These incessant recommendations were not thrown away. Already, in the twelfth century, schools begin to reappear, not only in the towns, but in the rural districts; and they go on multiplying and increasing in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Parliaments first begin to be stationary; universities are founded, paper is cheaper and commoner, and the art of writing attracts numerous disciples. It would be difficult to present an exact account of the state of primary instruction in France at this period. A certain number of documents, from which accurate statistics might be drawn up, have been destroyed. To make up for these, it is necessary to institute wide and close enquiries, and to carry them out in every department by the help of old archives, parish registers, forgotten documents hid away in notaries' offices; searching every record, in fact, where any trace has been preserved of what the people knew at that time, and of the efforts that were being made to teach them. Be it as it may, this search has been suc-

¹ Lhuillier, *l'Enseignement primaire dans la Brie*, Meaux, 1884. p. 9. = ² Babeau, *l'Instruction primaire dans les campagnes*, p. 8.

cessfully followed up on many points : it has triumphantly proved that primary instruction does not date from yesterday, as some would have us believe, but that it has been in all ages the object of the anxious care of the Church and the pious efforts of our fore-fathers.

This instruction varied in kind and degree— there is no doubt— considerably according to places, and according to epochs : there are, for instance, fewer schools to enumerate for the Middle Ages than for the Renaissance ; but may we not account for this in many places by the disappearance of deeds which would have perpetuated the remembrance of them ? If certain schools only appear in the seventeenth century, is it not often because the archives of the Communes only date from that period ? And must not those establishments have been multiplied beyond reckoning for such frequent mention of them to be found, as we shall show, in documents completely foreign to the subject ? If these discoveries, generally due to chance, prove that the children of little hamlets were carefully instructed, may we not reasonably conclude that in the more important of the surrounding neighborhoods, the children were not given over to ignorance, although the documents to prove this are not extant ¹ ?

According to M. Leopold Delisle, “ numerous documents prove abundantly that rural schools were multiplied throughout Normandy during the thirteenth century and those following it ². ” In 1212, for instance, the Religious of Saint Catherine claimed the right of nominating the school-master of Pavilly ³ in that region. In Brie, at the same date, this prerogative is reserved to the pastor of the village of Naud, where is still to be seen the tomb-stone of Evrat Polet, “ cleric and school-master of Samoy, ” in the thirteenth century ⁴.

We can prove similar facts all over France ; at Châteaubriant, at Château-Thierry in 1222, at Évreux in 1292, at Flavigny in 1272, at Jaligny and Nailly in 1256, at Orange in 1208, at Pont-sur-Yonne, at Quimper in 1260, at Saint-Apollinaire in 1216, at Tonnerre in 1220, at Troyes, at Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, at Ville-

¹ Cf. R. de Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 52. = ² *Études sur la condition de la classe agricole en Normandie*, p. 176. = ³ De Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 27. = ⁴ Lhuillier, pp. 13 et 14.

neuve-la-Guyard in 1276, at Villeneuve-le-Roi¹. Several passages, moreover, prove how familiar the idea of the primary school was to the men of the thirteenth century. The author of the life of William of Bellevesvre, Bishop of Châlon, towards the end of the thirteenth century, relates that, "if there were any young man in whose mind certain flames of honesty shone out, and who could not be provided with a living, the Bishop appointed him master or teacher, in one of the schools of the towns or the villages²." The tradesmen and artisans of Limousin often put it in their will that their children should be sent to school³; the preachers of the period make frequent allusion, as to a fact of daily occurrence, to little boys going to school with their Alphabet swung over their shoulder⁴; and it is easy to see that the education of girls was equally cared for.

Independently of those who were brought up in convents, and who generally belonged to the aristocracy⁵, the little girls of country parts had village school-mistresses who taught them to read. Thomas of Cantimpré relates the following anecdote: — "A young peasant girl besought her father to buy her a psalter, that she might learn to read. The father not being rich enough to afford the expense, the child was in despair, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to her in a dream, holding two psalters in her hands. Encouraged by this vision, she again entreated her father— 'My child,' he said, 'go every Sunday to the school-mistress, beg of her to give you some lessons, and try by your zeal to merit one of those psalters you saw in the Blessed Virgin's hand.' The little one obeyed him, and her school-fellows, seeing her earnestness, clubbed together to procure her the book she so much desired⁶."

In the fourteenth century, documents become more numerous,

¹ Buisson, pp. 54, 139, 273, 279, 736, 1092, 2111, 2933; Choron, 3^d fascic., p. 23; Maltre, p. 36; Quantin, p. 11. = ² Batault, p. 9. = ³ Buisson, p. 1594. = ⁴ Lecoy de la Marche, *la Chaire française au moyen âge*, p. 428. = ⁵ Dedenz l'enclos de l'abele — Fu la demoiselle nurie. — Quant ele avoit passé sel anz — De sun aë, fu bele e granz. — Dès qu'ele pot raisun entendre, — L'abeesse la feït apprendre. Marie de France, *le Fraisur*, édit. Suchier, verse 231, and following. = ⁶ We borrow this anecdote from M. Lecoy de la Marche, *la Société au xiii^e siècle*, in-12, Paris, 1880, p. 197.





and point out schools in parishes that have not even now the rank of communes. One may, therefore, conclude that schools existed, at least in the majority of the large villages. All these conclusions, it will be noticed, are essentially moderate and fully warranted by the facts and documents cited.

The learned author of *Bertrand du Guesclin*, M. Simeon Luce, asserts unhesitatingly that these schools existed, and declares that he came upon them almost everywhere¹. If we turn to the annals of our provinces, they are unanimous in showing us schools on all sides. The fourteenth century is full of them. We may make mention here of the schools of Burgundy—Avallon in 1304, Auxerre in 1316, Bèze in 1389, Chitry in 1344, Mâcon in 1369, Montcenis in 1347, and Saint-Seine, where, the same year, the master takes a subordinate to whom he makes over “the fishes that are given in Lent by the little children who learn the Alphabet and the Psalms².” La Brie makes a goodly show of schools, amongst others, Coulommiers and Lizy-sur-Ourcq. In Soissonnais, we have Presle, where Raoul “of Presles” restores the school that had been pulled down, and Dormans, where John “of Dormans” founds one to teach “the Alphabet, the Psalter and singing³.” In Champagne⁴, in Picardy, we find similar foundations, and similar customs. We may go on till we come to Albi, where “the master shall take no salary from the little children of the said city, who are not grammarians⁵”; to the diocese of Rodez, where we find schools in the little villages⁶;

¹ P. 15, eight mentions of schools. = ² De Charmasse. = ³ Choron, 3^d fascic., pp. 83 et 95. = ⁴ The Confraternity of the “dit Denier” at Châlons, founded in 1281, provided, not alone for the material wants of the poor, but for the instruction of the children. “The masters and governors have the poor little children, orphans and others, taught in the schools,” says the charter granted by Charles V., on March 14, 1379. (n. st.) Cf. *La très vertueuse et charitable compagnie dudit Denier*, petit in-4^o, Goth. (1550). Photographic reproduction belonging to M. le comte E. de Barthélemy. = ⁵ Compayré, *Étude historique sur l’Albigeois*, p. 209. This document is of the thirteenth century. It is followed by another of 1543, written in the same spirit. Therein we read: “Every Alphabetist, half-day student, or other scholar learning only reading” shall pay “10 sols.” But in the first clause treating of fees it is stated that children of the city are always exempt from their payment—“*exempts toutesfoys et quictes les enfans de ladite cité d’Alby et consulat.*” Ibid., p. 213. = ⁶ *Journal officiel*, June 3, 1887, report of the learned Societies, communicated by M. Lempereur.

to Bourg in 1391, to Chartres, Marseille, Nantes, Nevers, Orleans¹. Here authorities abound.

The fearful scourges which punished or tried men in those remote days— wars, epidemics, like the plague of 1348²— sometimes laid waste the land and scattered the teachers; but the schools held on stoutly, and the horrors of the Hundred years War were not able to crush them out. In a play published at the end of the ‘Chronicle of Mont-Saint-Michel’,³ there is a scene where a peasant school-master comes in and takes upon himself the charge of educating the children in the little hamlet of Saint-Étienne-de-Courtainnes, now part of the commune of Saint-Aubin-de-Courteraie, in the county of Orne: “You, Jean Hurel, and you, school-master, his brother, I have come to see you,” says a countryman to him one day. “I have a little child of from seven to eight years old; and you are going to take charge of him for me, to feed him, and manage him, and indoctrinate him.” Normandy was, indeed, a privileged region in this respect, as in so many others. Careful research shows that schools were founded there in almost every little town and village during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Sometimes, we find no trace of their existence until the fifteenth century; but these humble institutions evidently date from much farther back. M. de Beaurepaire, in his learned work on public instruction in the diocese of Rouen, states his belief that there was then in every parish a clerk charged with the management of the school and the drawing up of contracts, and capable of teaching reading, writing and latin to children. He explains in this way the fact why so many young students of tender years received the tonsure, shared in the stipends of the clergy, and then worked in the fields while awaiting the moment to receive holy orders. Thus, in the diocese of Rouen alone, from Michaelmas-day 1465 to Michaelmas-day 1466, three thousand nine

¹ For all these schools, vid. Allain, p. 29 and following; Babeau, p. 64; Batault, p. 128; Buisson, pp. 273, 279, 2111, 2373; de Charmasse, p. 19 and following; *Inventaire de l'hôpital général de Nevers*, B. 1; Lhuillier, pp. 15 and 16; Maltre, p. 61; Merlet, p. 3. Quantin, pp. 77, 115 and following; Rameau, p. 174; M^{lle} de Villarel. = ² Allain, p. 26 = ³ T. I, p. 162.

hundred and fifty-four children received the tonsure, all of whom must have had some elementary instruction ¹.

Schools must have been very widely disseminated, since Gerson, in his little treatise on the visitation of dioceses, composed about the year 1400, advises the Bishops to enquire "if every parish has a school, and how the children are taught, and to open a school there, if there be not one already ²."

These rural schools continue to flourish during the fifteenth century, and the teaching given there bears lasting fruits. A peasant of Gainneville, at seventy years of age, recalls the lessons of his master, whose hand-writing he recognizes on a deed that is presented to him ³. Contracts of apprenticeship or wardship often stipulate that the child shall receive the rudiments of instruction, and that his master, or guardian, shall provide him "with the necessities of eating, drinking, and for clothing himself and going to school." Apart from the numerous examples of this kind quoted by M. de Beaurepaire ⁴, facts of the same nature are constantly recurring in Paris from the thirteenth century, and in Brie, Burgundy, Limousin and Béarn ⁵. The "last will and testament" frequently contains legacies destined to provide for the schooling of children in whom the testator is interested—witness the collection of wills registered in the Parliament of Paris under the reign of Charles VI. ⁶

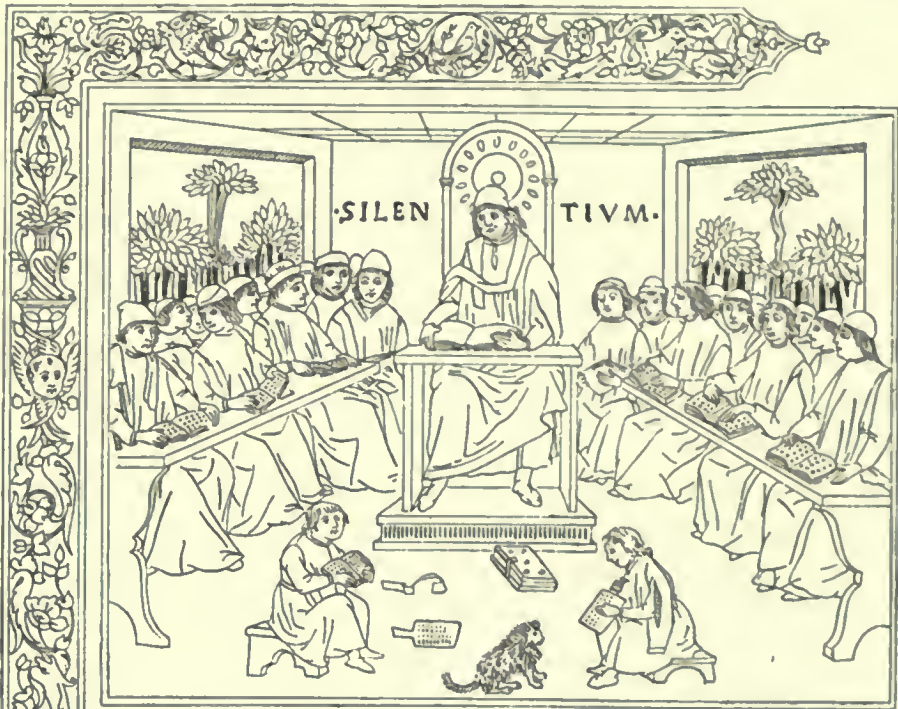
The latest works published on this long contested subject enable us to certify the existence at this period of schools in Champagne, Burgundy and Maine. To be more precise, as is desirable in such important questions, writers point out to us the schools of Abbeville, of Amiens, of Antibes in 1401, of Neuilly-Saint-Front in 1402, of Beaune in 1408, of Bordeaux in 1414, of Châtel-Censoir in 1487, of Clermont in 1490 ⁷, of Clisson in 1461, of Combon

¹ De Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 53. = ² *Tractatus de visitatione prælatorum et curatorum*; Gersonii opera, Antwerp edition, t. II, col. 1560. = ³ De Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 49. =

⁴ De Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 62. = ⁵ Allain, p. 37; Buisson, p. 1594; Lhuillier, p. 23; Quantin, p. 40; Sérurier, p. 19. = ⁶ Tuetey, *Collection des documents inédits*, passim. =

⁷ Coñard-Luys, *le Collège de Clermont en Beauvaisis, Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris*, tome XIII, 1886, p. 47 and following. In 1528, the "schools for little girls" were, at Clermont, separated from those of the boys.

in 1401, of Corbie in 1448, where the inhabitants exact that the masters should be in "sufficient numbers, generally capable, of fair life and good morals". And we might fitly mention here



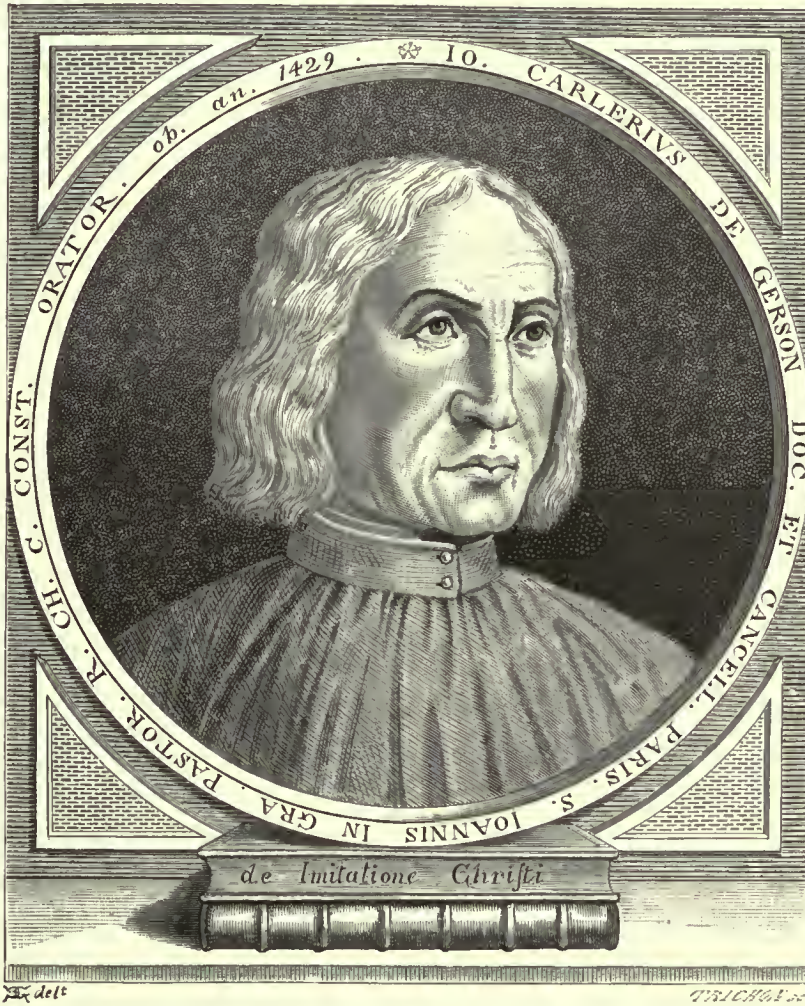
Schools prior to Blessed de la Salle. — Interior of a school of the fifteenth century, frontispiece of the book entitled : *Cantalycii epigrammatum liber ad Polydorum Tyburtium, Cæsenatem equitem comitemque* (1493).

— Drawn by Edouard Garnier, from the copy in the National Library, mYe. 81.

those other schools that are to be found at the same period at Corbigny in 1488, at Crecy-en-Brie, at Decize, at la Ferté-Bernard, where there was one "of most ancient date;" at Goupillières, at Haon-le-Châtel, at Hermant in Auvergne, at Montauban, at Montfort-l'Amaury, at Moulins in 1424, at Mortain, at Nîmes, at Plasnes, at Pont-Audemer in 1497, at Reims, at Rethel, at La Rochelle, at Saint-Laurent-de-Brèvedent, at Saint-Léonard, at Sisteron and at Vernon in 1415¹. Already we find at Lyons and Troyes

¹ Augustin Thierry, *Monuments de l'histoire du tiers état*, t. III, p. 572. = ² All these schools of the fifteenth century are pointed out by Allain, p. 30 and following; Babeau, p. 64; Buisson, p. 241; L. Charles, p. 2; de Charmasse, pp. 19 and following; Darcy, p. 14; Galabert, p. 6; Lacroix, p. 15; Lhuillier, p. 19; Maltre, p. 44; Quantin, p. 11; Veuclin, p. 6.

mistresses for girls¹. But what need have we of further evidence? A hundred, two hundred monographs have been written on this



Gerson (p. 23). — Drawn by Edouard Garnier, from a deed in the Print department of the National Library; engraved by Trichon.

subject by learned men, who have thrown full light upon these facts. Our adversaries cannot deny them and are condemned to silence. We have won the battle.

¹ Buisson, pp. 439 and 4756.

Paris, it is hardly necessary to say, was not lagging in this march of popular education. The annals of the establishments which that illustrious city devoted to the instruction of childhood, and of which we shall take a general view, furnish valuable details concerning the masters and pupils of olden times; and it is no exaggeration to say that Paris was the finished type of school life in the Middle Ages.

The beginnings of those humble institutions elude the glance of the historian, they defy his scrutiny, and it is only with fragmentary evidence, gathered from the chronicles of the time, that we are able to reconstruct their past. It is, however, probable that the schools of Paris first arose around Notre-Dame.

In the thirteenth century they were already flourishing, and eleven school-masters and one school-mistress figure on the roll of the land-tax laid on the inhabitants of Paris by Philip the Fair in 1292. Amongst these there are only two ecclesiastics; the others are seculars. But we must not include in the enumeration of these schools those which existed in the churches themselves. These should be added to the others if we would get an accurate notion of what popular education was in Paris, at that period of which as yet so little is known.

A century later, the precentor, who was a great dignitary of the Chapter, convenes a meeting of all the school-teachers of the city, and we find they number no less than sixty-three : forty-one masters, and twenty-two mistresses. In the middle of the fifteenth century, the number of schools may be reckoned at a hundred; the scholars at a thousand, without counting the little girls. At the close of the sixteenth century, the precentor Claude Joly estimates at five hundred the number of masters and mistresses.

We may conclude from these statistics that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the primary education of the city of Paris with its forty-three parishes, divided into one hundred and forty-seven districts, each, as a rule, with a school for boys and another for girls, represents a total of schools of *two hundred and ninety-four*. The parish of Saint-Sulpice, which was not much more

extensive than it is now, contained seventeen districts, consequently thirty-four schools.

Besides these, there were "charity schools" in nearly all the parishes; there were masters who lodged pupils in their houses; there were writing-masters; and, finally, there were all the establishments dependent upon the university.

The Church, not satisfied with merely founding schools, proceeded to organize them, to regulate their course of studies. The most ancient statutes extant are those of 1357¹; they were written in Latin, but a French translation in twenty-two articles was made soon afterwards. In 1380, the precentor William of Sarvarville gathered together in the great hall of his house the masters of the grammar schools of Paris, "respectable, prudent and discreet persons, lay as well as clerical," many of whom were masters of arts, and the school-mistresses, "honest women of good lives and morals." He read the statutes to them, and made them swear to observe them.

After undergoing many alterations which completed them, while preserving their spirit, the rules of 1357 and the various decisions of the precentors were collected by the cantor Dorsanne, who had them promulgated by Parliament on the 24th of March 1725. They remained henceforth the ruling authority of the primary schools of Paris.

On examining these rules, we see that their object was to secure the good management of the schools, the capability, the morality and the assiduity of the masters; to maintain charity amongst them; to prevent rivalry, and to see that the children, classed in little groups, were well taught.

The master undertook to fulfil his duties faithfully, and to instruct the children carefully in letters and good behaviour. He promised to honor the precentor of the Church of Paris, to obey him in all that concerned the government of the schools, and to respect the rights of the Chantry. The master was not to try to take away

¹ Transcribed in one of the books of the Chantry.

children from his colleagues, nor to receive children from their schools without their permission. He was to keep his own school. He might not farm it out, nor take a partner, but only an assistant master. The masters were requested to live in peace amongst themselves; every cause of complaint was to be carried before the precentor under pain of forfeiture of licence. The masters and mistresses were to observe the orders of the commission given to them, concerning the sex and number of the children, and the kind of books to be used¹. They were each to receive only a given number of children, otherwise the precentor kept back the fees of the supernumerary scholars. They were to be assiduous at their classes, and were not to absent themselves even on holidays without permission from the precentor, and without leaving a monitor to replace them.

The precentor, and, in his absence, the Chapter, exercised over the school an absolute authority, which was successively confirmed by act of Parliament in 1628, 1632 and 1665. Not only did he open schools, but no one else could open one without his consent. He named the masters, enquired into their capabilities, delivered and revoked their certificates of teaching. He visited the schools, saw that the rules were observed, and fined those who broke them. Every year he convened the masters to his presence, and held a synod in order to give them advice, to lecture them if necessary, and to inculcate to them the spirit of their profession. The authority of the precentor emanated from the Chapter, which in turn

¹ One of the points on which the statutes lay the greatest stress is the separation of the sexes. School-masters may not receive little girls, nor school-mistresses little boys, without an express permission from the cantor. This mingling of children of different sexes in the same class gave rise, no doubt, to manifold abuses: it is constantly alluded to. The prohibition is entered in the statutes of 1337, and repeated in the rules of 1626. In 1628, it is confirmed by act of Parliament. In 1663, in a synod, the cantor, M. Le Masle, again recalls it. In 1641, the Archbishop, M^r de Gondy, finds it necessary, owing to the disorders brought before him, to write a Pastoral letter on the subject. In 1635, M. Le Masle delivers a sentence which strengthens the prohibition by severe penalties. In 1666, the cantor, M. Ameline, renews the prohibition, and at the same time the Archbishop, M^r de Pérèfixe, publishes a fresh Pastoral about it. The stringent interdict is only raised in the country places where there are not children enough to establish a school for both sexes. In this case, the master may receive girls and boys, but at different hours.

held authority from the Archbishop. The Chapter possessed an authority which created, replaced and controlled that of the precentor. During the vacancy of the Chantry, the Chapter exercised its office, named and revoked the masters. Its authority extended to the collation of schools in the city and in some neighboring parishes. Placed under its jurisdiction and invested with the monopoly of primary instruction, the masters of the little



Notre-Dame de Paris at the time of Blessed de la Salle. "It is the precentor, and, in his absence, the Chapter of Notre-Dame that exercised supreme authority over the schools" (p. 28). — Drawn by Edouard Garnier, from a print of the period; engraved by Mlle Chevalier.

schools constituted a sort of elementary university which was distinct from the other, and not unfrequently its rival.

This community, so well organized and so useful, had, like so many others, a hard battle to fight in the early days of its existence, and it was not always victorious in the fight. First, in 1563, we see the provost of Paris trying, though unsuccessfully, to bring it under his control¹; but it was above all the corporation of writers who started that campaign against the schoolmasters which they were to take up later against the children of Blessed de la Salle.

¹ Fontanon, *Édits et Ordonnances*, t. IV, p. 412.

Not content, like those of Rouen, with attacking the school-mistresses under pretence that "the art of writing belonged by right to the male sex",¹ the writing-masters of Paris arrogated to themselves the exclusive privilege of teaching writing. After interminable discussions, Parliament maintained the rights of the school-masters.² Then came the turn of the mathematicians, who wanted forsooth to monopolize the teaching of arithmetic a pretension which was crushed by a decree of the Council of State.

There was only one power at this date which strove to make liberty prevail. That power was the Church. She had created the schools, she had organized and disciplined them. She had no notion of letting so important a function as education be left at the mercy of men unknown to her, and who might betray or corrupt youth; but neither did she choose that the guarantees she had established should be used as obstacles to hinder the spread of knowledge. Undoubtedly, established schools had the right to live; but they had not the right to prevent others from doing good. Thus the Church, far from discouraging new undertakings, stimulated them; moreover, she was ever ready to strike down the old order of things when it became tyrannical.

The Church, through her councils and her Pontiffs, had signified to the pastors her desire that they should open schools in their parishes; she directed them there through her Bishops; and in due time, she founded through her saints congregations that were charged to disseminate knowledge. These congregations penetrate into Paris in the seventeenth century, and this inaugurates a new phase in this long history.

Timid in their beginnings, they arose at first under the jurisdiction of the precentor, but soon emancipated themselves. Their nature and their aim were altogether different from the schools of the chantry. Teaching with them was not a trade, but a good

¹ De Beaurepaire, *Instruction publique en Normandie*, t. II, p. 276. = ² Decree of July 23, 1714. The details of these struggles will be found in the first edition of the *Life of Venerable de la Salle*, by Armand Ravelet, pp. 31 and following.

work. The masters did not live by their lessons, which were gratuitous. Charity called them to the work, and the charity of others sustained them in it.

It was not long before the masters of the chantry schools began to be jealous of these new competitors; they contrived to win over the precentor to their side, and made him see that his authority was attacked at its very foundation.

The new congregations were consequently compelled to plead their cause and beg for the right to do good; but their ardor was not abated by these obstacles. The precentor condemned them, but Parliament acquitted and approved them. The Ursulines, the Sisters of Notre-Dame and the Daughters of the Cross obtained decrees from Parliament granting them the right "to open schools without leave from the precentor." Parliament, in granting them this right, was supported by Royal letters patent which recognized their existence. We must mention, however, that the majority of these new establishments were for girls.

But, towards the close of the seventeenth century, there arose another new foundation—the parish "charity schools." Created by the initiative of the pastors, they were placed at their birth under the supervision of the precentor; such was in 1639 the school of Saint-Laurent¹, of Saint-Eustache in 1646, and of Saint-Séverin². A day came when they determined to shake off this control, which the jealousy of the school-masters rendered intolerable, and the pastors of Saint-Paul, Saint-Leu, Saint-Louis and Saint-Étienne opened charity schools, the "Association of charity" reserving to itself the right of selecting and examining the masters. This almost amounted to a *coup d'État*.

The precentor wanted to maintain his authority, which he only held from the episcopal authority, and instituted a law-suit which Parliament decided in favor of the parish schools³. After

¹ Founded by St Vincent de Paul, in common with the Pastor, M. Lestocq. =

² Not many years ago, was still to be seen the following naïf inscription on the front of a house opposite Saint-Séverin— "Box for school-books for poor girls.— Who-soever shall give to one of these little ones... amen. I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." S. Matth. x, 42. = ³ Decree of May 25, 1766.

endless charges, the affair was compromised¹. The parties, “ animated with the spirit of peace and good will which should prevail amongst persons of their character, and persuaded that their kindly union would contribute not a little to support more solidly in the future the establishment of charity schools, so useful to the public, ” agreed that “ the pastors should receive from the precentor the right to name and oversee the masters of the charity schools in their own parishes. ”

Thus we see that, in the Church, the strife arose, not from love of money, but solely from the desire to do good. The spirit of charity keeps parties within bounds, and reconciles rival pretensions, and puts an end to the struggle without causing justice to suffer any prejudice.

This has always been the spirit animating the Church.

¹ National Archives, Transaction of May 18, 1699, before M. Jousse, notary.





ED. GARNIER del.

A school prior to Blessed de la Salle, from Abraham Bosse. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH AND THE SCHOOLS IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.



PROTESTANTISM has played in education a part which has been greatly misunderstood. Primary schools abound now in Protestant countries, and the Reformation gets the credit of it. This is an unmerited honor. Luther, it is true, addressed, in 1524, a letter to all the councillors of the German States urging them to found Christian schools, and fourteen years later, in 1538, he published *Directions to Inspectors* which are an essay on the general system of public instruction. But these documents appeared

several centuries later than the urgent decrees of the Council of Lateran. What Luther tried to do in Germany, the provincial

councils of France had succeeded in doing some years before in our provinces, and with far more wisdom and precision. And so it must ever be. Heresy only follows truth— steals its ideas, alters them, and then presents them to the world as its own conceptions. Luther speaks after the councils. The Protestant gymnasium is an imperfect copy of the Catholic universities and the colleges of the Jesuits. Pestalozzi, the most celebrated of Protestant pedagogues, lived a century later than Blessed de la Salle.

But the principal idea of Luther's reform, the one which marks his system, and which, later on, we shall see passing from it into our legislation, is to place the exclusive direction of education in the hands of the civil power. When he wants to establish schools all over Germany, he addresses himself to the German nobles : " It devolves on you to take in hand this work; for if we entrust the care of it to the parents, we shall perish a hundred times before the thing is done. I pray you, therefore, not to reject my advice, but to take to heart and to take in hand the salvation, the happiness and the prosperity of Germany. " This is all that the great reformer has to propose— that parents should be excluded from the first of all duties towards their children, and that an appeal be made to that intervention of the State, the fatal consequences of which we are witnessing to-day! If, in reality, Protestantism has exercised any influence on the diffusion of knowledge, it is in virtue of that providential law by which God brings good out of the very excess of evil and the disorders caused by human passions.

The direct and immediate effect of the Reformation was above all the ruin of a great number of schools. It swept over France like a pestilence, and everywhere gave rise to fearful strife. The school could not continue to live where the church had been thrown down and burnt to the ground.

The documents collected by Abbé Allain¹ leave no doubt on this head. These testimonies ought to be known.

" We admire in our diocese, " says the Bishop of Évreux to the

¹ *L'Instruction primaire en France avant la Révolution*, p. 44 and following.

synod of 1576, "the solicitude of our fathers; for there was scarcely a parish of any importance in the diocese where there was not a school-house, and a foundation for the endowment of the school. But at the same time we must curse the negligence, or rather the sacrilegious conduct of our age, where we have seen gentlemen, parishioners, usurp or alienate the school-houses and the property settled upon them; so that now we seldom find a school or a master, we will not say in the country-places, but even in the towns, nay, even in the largest cities." The Council of Rouen, in 1584, enjoins all the Bishops of the province to re-establish in their dioceses the old schools that had fallen into decay; it orders them to have the property taken from these schools restored to them, and desires them to prescribe a uniform method of teaching for the whole diocese.

In his statutes of April 13th 1600, the Bishop of Avranches writes: "The schools shall be re-opened in the sees where they were formerly, and fathers of families in parishes belonging to the said sees shall send their children to be taught there, paying the customary tax. And search shall be made for all the foundations of the said schools."

These complaints recur continually through the pastorals of the Bishops, like a melancholy refrain; we hear them in those of Arras in 1534, of Ypres in 1577, of Saint-Omer in 1583. The local chronicles, indeed, show that several schools perished in this troubled period. In Champagne, for instance, the school of Chaource was destroyed in 1572, and that of Bar-sur-Seine was ruined during the League¹. At Montauban, according to the report of the syndic in 1599, "the young men had become so demoralized by the civil wars, that they cast off all restraint, and gave themselves up to dissipation, without devoting any time to the study of letters, which, indeed, it is no longer possible to pursue in that town, seeing there is neither school nor college there." This sad state of things prevailed everywhere. In 1590, Henri IV. declares that

¹ Babeau, p. 40; quoted by Allain, p. 47.

"ignorance ran riot in his kingdom on account of the prolonged civil wars". The founder of a college, in the diocese of Mans, complains, in 1594, "that good studies are cast aside and banished," on account of the troubles of the kingdom¹. It is the universal outcry. These fatal effects of the new heresy were filling the Church with uneasiness, and this was one reason which caused the Bishops² to insist so strenuously on the duty of education.

The Council of Trent was the signal for a new development in public instruction. It began by reforming religious teaching. In 1546, it ordered classes of theology to be resumed in the cathedral churches and in the monasteries, and in 1563 it ordered seminaries to be opened in every diocese.

It went farther than this. The canons of its fifth session prescribe that "in every church there be an ecclesiastic to teach grammar gratuitously to clerical students and other poor scholars."

The Bishops of France hastened to follow this movement, which in certain places they had anticipated. Warned, by the example of Germany, of the fatal consequences of religious divisions, they turned all their solicitude to the instruction of the priests and the people. Heresy carried its propaganda into the most remote country parts, and the only way to fight against it was by giving good, solid instruction to all classes.

The particular councils applied the general decisions of the Church according to the particular wants of each diocese.

Nearly all the provincial councils and the diocesan synods of the sixteenth century, anterior or posterior to the Council of Trent—the synod of Sens in 1524, the synods of Chartres in 1526 and 1555, the synod of Toulouse in 1531, those of Poitiers in 1544, of Auxerre in 1552, of Arras in 1570, recall prior decisions; so does that of Besançon in 1576, of Lyons in 1577, of Rouen in 1581; the provincial councils of Bourges in 1528, of Meaux in 1579, of Tours in 1583—deal with the question of the schools, and decree that

¹ Allain, p. 46. = ² Bellée, p. 110. = ³ Councils of Mayence (1549), of Narbonne (1581). Synod of the exemption of Montivilliers (sixteenth century). Cf. R. de Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 76.





there be a school in every parish. In places too poor to support one, a priest or a competent cleric is to be charged with the instruction of the children.

In 1526, a council held at Chartres prescribes “ that there be in every parish a public school where the children can go, and where there shall be a priest or a clerical student sufficiently well-informed to teach them their letters, the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed and every thing else contained in the primer. ” The Council of Tours of the same year orders the Bishops to take heed “ that in each parish several persons be appointed, at the expense of the parishioners, to teach children the alphabet, the first rudiments of grammar, catechism and singing. ”

The Council of Cambrai, held in 1565 under the presidency of the Archbishop of that town, with the Bishops of Tournai, Arras, Saint-Omer and Namur, carrying out the decrees of the Council of Trent, draws up a regulation for the schools, where we read the following :—

“ They will be careful to restore, or to keep up, Christian schools to instruct children in the rudiments of religion. There is to be a school-master for the instruction of youth in every parish. The boys are to be kept separate from the girls as much as possible. The masters will only read to their scholars books approved by the Bishops. The pastors, the chaplains, or the school-masters will teach the catechism to the children every sunday after Vespers. The pastors will enquire every month into the progress of the children, and will do their very utmost to inspire them with the fear and love of God from their tenderest years. The rural deans will visit these little schools once a month, or at least once a year, and will report to the Ordinary concerning the method of instructing youth employed by each master. ”

The Council of Bourges, in 1584, decrees that the education of girls be confided to women capable of forming them to Christian virtues; that of Aix, 1585, prescribes that Confraternities of Christian doctrine and Christian schools be founded without delay. What can better express the solicitude of the Church for instruction than

those words of the council of Bordeaux in 1583 quoted by Abbé Allain¹: "It was well said not long ago by a wise man of this century that there was nothing one could do more divine or more agreeable in the sight of God than to instruct children. For youth is the hope and seed of the republic, and if, while tender and manageable, it be diligently taught, it will bring forth fruit in abundance and of wonderful savour, as contrariwise, if it be neglected and despised, either it will bring forth no fruit, or will only produce very bitter fruit. Christians must therefore provide by all means in their power, that in every parish, or at the least in every well-known and well populated borough, there be a school-master, who, besides grammar, will teach the children what concerns religion." Such documents as these are not as widely known as they ought to be.

From the particular councils, the law passes to the diocesan synods, and becomes the rule of the clergy in all countries. We can trace their direct affiliation. At one time we see the very decrees of the council of the province reproduced word for word in the synodal rules of the Bishops who were present at the council; again we see the editor of these rules, who is generally a delegate from the Bishop, or the Bishop himself, taking care to indicate in a marginal note the council from which they are taken. All this is full of wisdom, discipline and good sense.

Once these regulations make their way into the synodal decrees, they remain there permanently. They are renewed periodically every five or six years; the rules relating to schools, more and more complete, always figure there in the same place.

The Bishop, as a rule, does not rest satisfied with promulgating a general law, charging the clergy to apply it, and the archdeacons, in making the visitation, to see that it is carried out; he enters into details, issues pastorals, frequent, special and minute, treating the question in all its bearings, and, if it be possible, he founds diocesan communities charged with education. But here great

¹ *L'Instruction primaire en France avant la Révolution*, p. 221.

scope is given in the diversity of means by which the great object is to be attained.

The Church has always been the enemy of centralization. She communicates to her children the charity that animates her, she directs them to the same object, and exacts that they follow the same path; but she leaves to each one his own manner and his own individuality. She does not seek to make them the servile instruments of one will; she dreads uniformity; she permits and delights in variety. This is why a certain disparity is noticeable in the various dioceses where popular instruction is concerned. Everywhere the same direction is given; but it is not everywhere followed in the same way. The populations have not all arrived at the same standard, they are more or less advanced, more or less docile. Merit and originality are also taken into account. In one place, the Bishop busies himself zealously with the schools, and is seconded by pious and devoted seculars; in another place, the population is hostile and resists; it is more ignorant, and the same efforts produce inferior results.

In order to understand all that the Church has done for popular instruction, to see how she laid the first foundations of the present legislation, it is necessary to peruse the synodal decrees of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

At Angers, in 1607, the synodal statutes decree that the schoolmasters be "good and learned persons, living without scandal, and teaching children not merely profane letters, but likewise good morals, the commandments of God and the Church and the articles of faith." In 1658, the Bishop, Henry Arnaud, orders all the pastors to open schools everywhere that one is wanted, to see that the boys and the girls are brought up apart—the former by men, the latter by women; and in order to assure himself that these orders are carried out, he desires that the names of all the masters and mistresses of schools throughout the diocese be sent up to him.

This principle of the separation of the boys and girls is constantly laid down in the Church decrees. From those statutes of

the Bishop of Soissons in the ninth century, of which we have already made mention, to the prescriptions of George d'Amboise

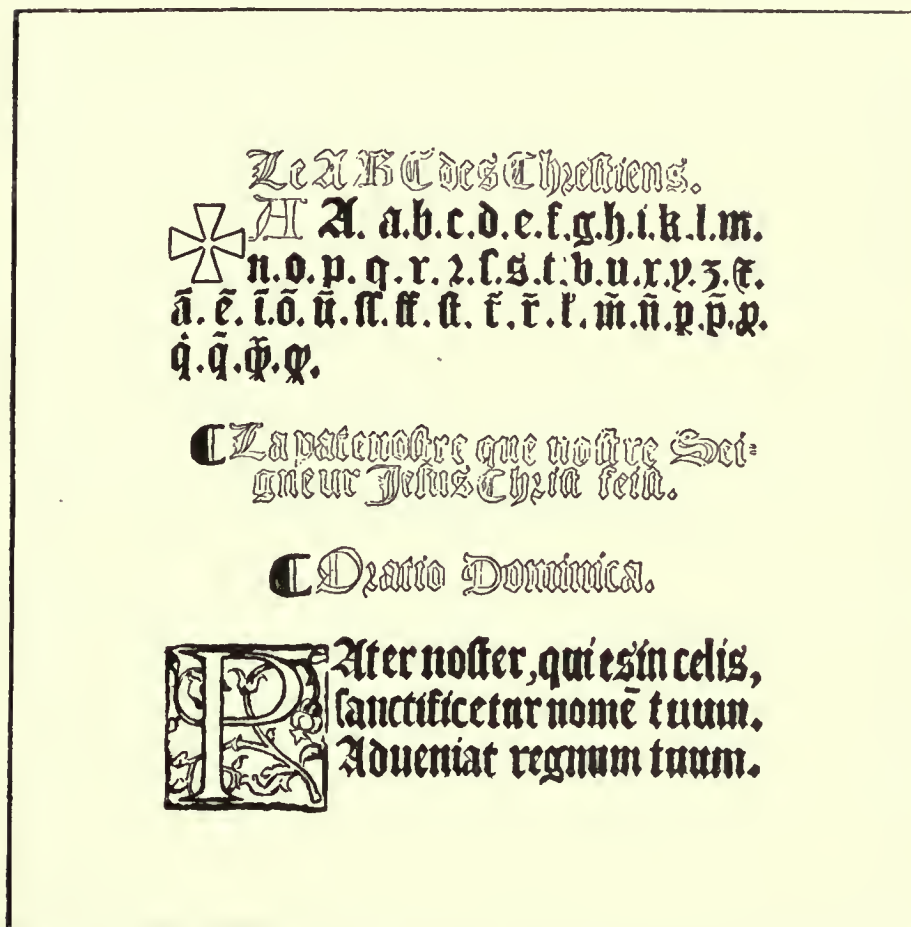


School before the time of Blessed de la Salle. — Coming out of school. — Engraving from the *Heures de la Vierge* printed by Thielman Kerver (1523). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier.

at Rouen towards the end of the fifteenth century¹, and of the

¹ R. de Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 72.

Archbishop of Cambrai in 1564, the Bishops never lose an opportunity of reminding the clergy that "it is very necessary here and elsewhere that the boys and the girls should have schooling apart⁴." The synodal statutes of Bayeux in 1662, of Évreux



Schools before the time of Blessed de la Salle. — Fac-simile of the first page of the *A B C des chrestiens* bound with the *Heures de Notre-Dame*, of Jacques Kerver, MDLXXV. — Bibl. Carnavalet : Réserve.

The two works must have been printed at the same time.

and Orleans in 1664, of Seez in 1674, of Avranches in 1682, and a score of others, enjoin it expressly. The utmost limit of toleration is that, if there be only one master, "the boys and girls shall at least be instructed in different places and at different hours²." No doubt, the want of accommodation often led to these wise regulations being infringed, but they were not any-

¹ De Resbecq, pièces justificatives, *Propositions de l'évêque de Cambrai aux bourgeois de Valenciennes* (1564). = ² Allain, p. 224.

where looked upon as a dead letter. At Magny-Lambert, for instance, in the diocese of Autun, the report of the diocesan visit in 1689 mentions the fact that "Michel Millot, a good school-master, teaches both girls and boys, but not together¹." We quote this merely as an example.

The synod of Angers, in 1664, deals energetically with this grand and noble question of education: "Every parish should have its schools, or at least a priest, or a clerical student sufficiently educated to teach the children." The Bishops of Angers, full of zeal for education, occupied themselves actively about it. "Amidst the many cares laid upon us by the Episcopal office," writes one of them in 1676, "there is not one that we have more at heart than the instruction of children. We, therefore, entreat the clergy to devote a portion of their own time to this work wherever there is no school. In case there are several priests, the last in rank shall be deputed to this work, or another older, previously examined and approved by the Bishop."

The statutes of the Bishop of Mans, in 1620, advise the opening of schools in every parish².

The episcopal decree of Senez, in 1676, on the diocesan visitation, enjoins upon the visitor to make sure that the masters teach the boys well to read, and write, and serve mass, and also instruct them in the catechism.

The Bishop of Châlons in 1662³, Mgr de Lascaris d'Urfé at Limoges in 1686⁴, urge their diocesans to look to the religious instruction of the children and increase the number of schools. If we want to make ourselves acquainted with the organization of schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we shall find it outlined in the episcopal decrees.

The school-masters were named in various ways. Originally, the right of naming them was exercised by the lords of the manors, as part of their prerogative. We may quote amongst many instances Gisors⁵ in the fourteenth century, Clisson⁶, Com-

¹ De Charmasse, p. 140. = ² Bellée, p. 22. = ³ Fayet, *la Rétribution scolaire*, Paris, 1886, in-18. = ⁴ Allain, p. 104. = ⁵ De Beaurepaire, t. I, pp. 30, 41. = ⁶ Maltre, p. 44.

bon and Plasnes in the fifteenth. In some places the right belonged to the religious of the neighboring monastery, which seemed natural enough. We have already pointed out this custom in the thirteenth century, and it will suffice to mention here the school of Coulommiers, to which the Prior of Sainte-Foy named the masters (in 1339)¹, the school of Corbie in 1448, and those of Harfleur and Montivilliers, that were dependent, one on the abbey of Corbie, and the other two on the Benedictines of Montivilliers².

In these several cases, we must undoubtedly recognize a pious deference for the will of the founder of the school; but, in reality, the principle generally acted on was, that "those who pay the wages of a school-master have the right to name him³."

Acting upon this, it was, as a rule, the inhabitants who elected the teachers. The municipal officers did not confine their interference to looking after the situation of the school and the salubrity of the children's class-rooms⁴. The aldermen in the district of the Nord, at Villeneuve-le-Roi, for instance, in 1506, at Harfleur in 1563, at Bernay in 1601⁵; the consuls in the south, at Buis, at Caylus in the fifteenth century, at Albi in the sixteenth⁶; the parishioners under the direction of the parish-priest in Burgundy, in Champagne, in Gâtinais⁷, examine the candidates for the mastership. Sometimes, as at Montélimart in the sixteenth century, they put them through a public examination⁸. Then, they make an agreement with the master, verbal or written, engaging to pay him a salary, while he, on his side, promises to teach in the school for a given number of years. The numerous deeds of this nature which have been preserved in the communal archives generally show a payment in proportion to

¹ Lhuillier, p. 15. = ² Augustin Thierry, *loc. cit.*; De Beaurepaire, t. I, pp. 32 and 35. = ³ Decree of the Parliament of Tournai (October 11, 1696); Allain, p. 122. = ⁴ Galabert, p. 10 (school-house and mayor's office united); Buisson, p. 111 (at Foix). = ⁵ Quantin, p. 52; De Beaurepaire, t. I, p. 33; Veulin. = ⁶ Lacroix, p. 15; Galabert, p. 6; *Archives communales d'Albi*, FF, 106. = ⁷ Allain, p. 123; De Charmasse, p. 59; Babeau, pp. 68-70; Maggiolo, *les Archives scolaires de la Beauce et du Gâtinais*, p. 9. = ⁸ Buisson, p. 736.

the number of children admitted into the schools— a just measure calculated to encourage the masters.

This payment was generally very small. The rule of the schools published in 1685 by M^{gr} de Roquette, Bishop of Autun, fixes it at five pence a month for the scholars who only learn to read; ten for those who learn to read and write; fifteen for those who, besides this, learn arithmetic and latin. This scale of charges only existed in the towns. In the villages, people followed established custom. Owing to the poverty of the inhabitants, the charge seldom exceeded one or two pence a month¹.

At Limoges, in the sixteenth century, the master received nearly seven pence a year “ for the little *Abécédaire*s² ;” in the diocese of Bordeaux, the rate rose to three pence a month³. This participation of the parents in the schooling of their children was generally accepted, and the letters of the Intendants, and other documents extant concerning the schools, prove that the peasants were very willing to contribute their slender share⁴. The salary of the master was paid sometimes in kind. In the environs of Avignon, for instance, twelve fathers of families were, each in turn, obliged to receive the master at their table for one month⁵. Sometimes, the masters and mistresses were dispensed from paying taxes, as was established at Rouen and in Champagne⁶.

The nomination of the master by those invested with the right to appoint him does not suffice; the sanction of the ecclesiastical authority is indispensable. The superior right of the Bishop is always held in reserve. He is the guardian of faith and morals, and it is for him to see that bad doctrine is not taught to the people, above all to children.

“ It happens, ” observe the synodal Constitutions of Poitiers, “ that masters who are scarcely grammarians want to nibble at everything and teach everything. ” This conceit that fancies it

¹ Fayet, *la Rétribution scolaire*, p. 4. = ² Buisson, p. 1596. = ³ Allain, p. 130. = De Boislisle, *Contrôle général des finances*, t. II, n^o 344; Veucelin, and others. = ⁵ Buisson, 2933. = ⁶ At Rouen in 1405, and at Troyes in 1415. Allain, pp. 139-141.

knows everything, and is bent on showing off its ignorance, is, apparently, no new thing; but, in former times, it was kept in its place. The explanation of the Scriptures was reserved to theologians, and that of grammar to school-masters, provided they were competent. The Bishop only confided education to masters whom he had examined and approved of, and who were under his jurisdiction. It was before him they were taken when accused of any misdemeanor; it was from him they held their licence to teach. There was no exception to this rule. The synod of Arras, in 1570, formally decrees that masters appointed by the towns, by the magistrates, even by individuals at their own expense, shall be deprived of their schools unless they have been approved by the Bishop or his representative. The Council of Narbonne, in 1561, enforces the same principle. In a word, the commons, even when claiming the right to present masters whose expenses they defray, bow before the supreme authority of the Bishop, who alone has the right to accept or reject the candidates proposed to him¹. No one dreams yet of refusing to the Church the right to control the education that she had created, encouraged and upheld through centuries.

The jurisprudence of the council of State invariably recognizes the right of the Bishops to appoint masters; this is proved by the sentences delivered for the dioceses of Sens in 1686, of Lyons and Cahors in 1668, of Autun in 1669, and of Sisteron in 1695². The Archbishop of Bourges informs the Assembly of 1685 that, in his visitation of the parish of Issoudun, the Pastor complained to him that certain individuals kept a school without his permission. The Bishop cited them before his tribunal; they refused to appear, and the judge said they were right. The Bishop then appealed to the council of State, which confirmed the Episcopal sentence. The Bishop of Valence speaks of a similar decree delivered for Dauphiné and Vivarais.

The Parliament of Paris acted on the same principle, as is

¹ Buisson, p. 737. = ² *Mémoires du clergé*, t. I, p. 995 and following; Quantin, p. 53; Archives of the city of Bourg, GG, p. 232.

attested by the decisions given in favor of the Bishop of Meaux, of the precentor of the college church of Saint-Quiriace at Provins in 1653, and of the Bishop of Orleans in 1682¹. But this was not always the case with the provincial parliaments and tribunals.

These had a tendency to encroach, and looked askance at any institution which inclined to withdraw from their authority. This led to their being sometimes troublesome to the Church. At one time we see the supreme courts of Salins and of La Rochelle claiming the direction of the primary schools; at another, the parliaments of Bordeaux and Toulouse contending for the right of ruling over them. At Amiens, the aldermen of the city want to get the mastership of them². But there are other magistrates who do not refuse to acknowledge the Episcopal authority, and we see the parliament of Orleans, in 1597, giving its sanction to the Bishop's claim³.

The King, on his side, was disposed to favour the mission of the Church. But it never occurred to any one in those days to consider the keeping of a school as a public function paid by the State. This socialistic notion of the Monarch teaching the people to read, just as he raised taxes, or declared war, dates from the French Revolution, which borrowed it from the Protestants, who had taken it from the Republics of pagan antiquity. In the Middle Ages, if the King had wanted to instruct the people, he would have found neither men nor money for the purpose. He confined himself consequently to following in the wake of the Church, and embodying in his edicts the laws she formulated in her councils. We have already quoted a great number of councils and synods in the first half of the sixteenth century which order schools to be opened in all the parishes. In the Ordonnance of Orleans, January 1560, the same rule is laid down, and the passage is worth quoting: "Besides the aforesaid theological prebend, another prebend shall be allotted for the support of a preceptor, who,

¹ Buisson, p. 121, article from the pen of Maggiolo; *Mémoires du clergé*, t. 1, p. 1039.

= ² *Mémoires du clergé*, t. 1, pp. 985 and 1000. = ³ Buisson, p. 121.

on this account, shall instruct the children of the town gratuitously; the said preceptor shall be elected by the Archbishop or the Bishop of the place, in common with the canons of their church, and the mayors, aldermen and councillors of the town, and shall be removeable by the said Archbishop or Bishop, with the above-named advice. ”

Thus it was at the cost of the Church that the State then wanted to establish schools, as was proposed by the deputies of the nobility at the States General, who demanded that the pastors “ should give religious instruction to children of tender years ¹. ”

But the confraternities of the tradesmen and the artisans having been suppressed some years previously, in 1539, the same ordinance of Orleans allotted the revenues of those confraternities for the support of the schools of the nearest towns, boroughs and villages, and charged the royal officers, the mayors and aldermen, to have a care that no portion of the money was diverted to any other purpose.

The Edict of 1551 ordered the school-masters to ask for the approbation of the Bishop.

The mayors and aldermen would not have been sorry to meddle in the administration of the schools without having to open their own purses, and they managed, in Paris, to win some favor for their pretensions. But the Church fought bravely for her rights, and the King was generally more inclined to second her mission than to impede it. Moreover, the Reformation was beginning to spread in alarming proportions, so that strict watch over the schools had become more necessary than ever.

In 1570, letters patent decree that all school-masters shall be catholic, and “ that bad books be sought for. ”

In 1579, the General Assembly of the clergy, gathered together at Melun, shows signs of being alarmed by the efforts of heresy to pervert the faith of the people by means of the schools. Germany was already lost, France was threatened. The clergy, ever the

¹ G. Picot, *les États généraux*, t. II, p. 97.

vigilant guardians of truth, give all their attention to this vital concern. They recommend sound doctrine to the masters, as well as good morals, and, in order the better to provide against

LE RECTEUR.



Mon fils, jusqu'au Cercueil, faut apprendre,
Et tenir pour perdue le jour qui s'est passé,
Si tu n'y a de quelque chose profité,
Pour plus sage & sçavant te rendre.

*Commence à faire attention sur ce qui
est ici Représenté par les NOMS &
FIGURES de Fleurs, d'un Chien,
de la Femme, d'un Homme, d'une
Maison, d'un Chapeau, du Pain &
d'un Coûteau : & continuë d'obser-
ver, peu à peu, ce qui suit.*

Schools prior to Blessed de la Salle : their books, their teaching, • object-lessons. •
Reprint of a page from the *Very easy Method of teaching children to read in French, in Latin,
by several figured illustrations of different things known to them, very useful, and even necessary,
for life and salvation, as well as for the glory of God.*
Dijon, Claude Michard, printer and music-seller at St John the Evangelist, 1m-12, no date ¹.

the peril, the Assembly lays down the principle that the police of the schools is not a matter of secular jurisdiction, but that the

¹ *My child, it behoves thee to learn unto death, and hold for lost the day whereof thou hast not profited to become wiser and more learned. Begin to pay attention to what is here represented by the names and figures of Flowers, of a Dog, of Woman, of a Man, of a House, of a Hat, of Bread, of a Knife : and go on observing, little by little, what follows. =* ² Judging from the costumes, these engravings are of the sixteenth century. The specimen given here belongs to the Library of the Arsenal.

Bishops alone and other ecclesiastical persons have the right to examine and appoint school-masters and school-mistresses.

The general Assembly of the clergy in 1605 and 1606 reverts to this question, and entreats the King to interpose his sovereign

Le Maître d'Ecole.



Perd souvent son tems, d'Enseigner les Pareffeux & Négligens!

Schools prior to Blessed de la Salle : their books and teaching. — Fac-simile of a page of the *Very easy Method* for teaching children to read in Latin and French, etc.— See foregoing.

authority and compel the principle to be respected. The King gave a favorable answer and promised to interfere. He kept his word, and the edict of December 1606 decided that school-masters should be approved of by the clergy, and that, if they had a complaint to make, it would be dealt with by the Bishops.

¹ The legend reads : *The school-master often loses his time, teaching lazy boys and careless boys.*

Throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, the King and the clergy are agreed ; the King addresses himself to the Bishops to commend the schools to their solicitude. Louis XIII. writes in this sense to the Bishop of Poitiers in 1640 ; Louis XIV. writes to the Bishops of Châlons and Oloron ¹. The civil power unhesitatingly bows down before the ecclesiastical.

The royal Declarations of February 1657 and of March 1666 renew the prescriptions of 1608. Finally, in 1685, the King, in his answer to the clergy, promises to forbid persons of either sex from opening a school without an episcopal authorization, and he kept this promise by the declaration of 1698, which once more consecrates the superior right of the Bishop ² : “ We desire that, as far as possible, *masters and mistresses be appointed in all the parishes where they are lacking*, to instruct children, and specially those whose parents have made profession of the pretended reformed religion, in the catechism and the necessary prayers, as also to teach them to read and even to write, if they should need it ; and that in places where no other funds exist, the necessary sum be levied on the inhabitants, to the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds a year for the masters, and one hundred for the mistresses, and that the letters to this effect be sent forth free of cost on information given us by the Archbishops, and Bishops, and the commissaries distributed over our provinces for the execution of our orders. ”

The regulation of fiscal measures taken by the communes for the support of the schools, and the settling of any differences which might arise on this head— such was the prudent line of action to which the State confined itself at that period, such were the duties of the Intendants. When, however, at the end of the eighteenth century, the latter had become contaminated by the impiety that was then spreading over France, we see them sometimes faithless to their mandate. In 1769, the priests of the archpresbytery of Vézelay address a petition to their Bishop, urging the need

¹ Sérurier, p. 12. = ² Allain, p. 207.

there is of instruction in order to form true worshippers of God, faithful subjects of the King, and good citizens. They want all the country-people to know how to read, and point out the means to be employed in order that every parish may be endowed with a school. Then they add: "We feel the difficulty there is to make the Intendants accept this truth; they refuse to confirm the deeds of the parishes for the appointment of school-masters, the result of which is that the majority of parishes are without any." They, therefore, adjure the Bishop to carry the matter before the general Assembly of the clergy, that it may thus be brought before the King. But this is not a fact to be generalized, and in perusing the correspondence of the Intendants, and the papers they have left in the provincial archives, we find them almost always zealously occupied in levying the taxes for primary instruction¹.

The State, having once furnished the Church with a portion of the funds needed for the support of the schools², considered its rôle of administrator at an end, and made way for the clergy, to whom belonged the right to control the choice of the masters.

The Bishops never flagged under the weighty responsibility which public instruction laid upon them. They took every care that persons charged with the direction of the schools should be irreproachable as to age, knowledge and morals. They called in the various ecclesiastical functionaries of the diocese to assist them in their mission, and sometimes these auxiliaries of the Bishop had the direct appointment of the masters of the primary schools.

The school-master at Amiens and at Rheims³; the precentor in the dioceses of Paris and Sens, and in the town of Autun⁴; the Dean of the Chapter of Meaux, at Crecy-en-Brie, as early as the fifteenth century; the Canons of Valence at Saint-Apollinaire, were charged to appoint the masters⁵. At Lizy-

¹ Allain, p. 213; De Charmasse; De Boislisle, *Contrôle général des finances*. =

² Allain, p. 211. The Bishop of Châlon invites the pastors to profit by the decree of 1698.

= ³ Darsy, p. 20; Allain, p. 64. = ⁴ Lhuillier, p. 9; De Charmasse, p. 26; Buisson, p. 273. At Senlis (1353) it was the sub-cantor for the girls' schools, and the Bishop for the boys'. Cf. Morel, p. 54. = ⁵ Allain, p. 29; Lhuillier, p. 19.

sur-Oureq, in the fourteenth century, the Rector and the Chancellor of the cathedral shared this duty, which, at Coueron, in 1516, belonged to the Dean of Saint-Pierre of Nantes¹. At Chartres, in 1555, the collation of the schools fell to the charge of the parish-priest, who represented the Bishop. According to the statutes of Châlons in 1671, the masters were to be sent up for nomination by the priests of the parishes to the Deans or Promoters, who examined them in science, piety and morals, and then delivered to them a certificate, which was, in fact, a sort of diploma, on presentation of which to the Bishop or the Vicar General, their appointment was confirmed.

By whomsoever the teacher is named, the approbation of the Bishop is always essential. The newly elected candidate is examined by the Bishop or the Arch-priests; if he has already taught, he produces a certificate from the priest of the parish in which he was employed². If he is competent, of good life and morals, the Bishop accepts him, and he goes to the Episcopal house, with his papers duly signed, to be invested in his office, or, if he be too poor to undertake the journey, the Archdeacon invests him when he comes round on his visitation. If he behaves badly, he is revoked, but with certain forms which testify to the paternal, as well as just character of the administration of the period. Thus, an Archdeacon, making his round, rings a bell and calls the inhabitants to the porch of the church, and there, in the presence of the pastor, the parishioners make their complaint of the master, whether it be that he has misconducted himself, or blasphemed, or taught the children badly; a report is drawn up by the Archdeacon, who sends it up to the Bishop to be dealt with.

For the masters were not left to themselves once they were appointed. In Paris, the precentor convened them every year on the sixth of May, read and explained the rules to them, and made them promise to observe them. In the diocese of

¹ Lhuillier, p. 16; Maltre, p. 46. = ² *Ordonnances synodales de Meaux* (1669).





Châlons, they were convoked twice a year by the Dean, who reminded them of their duties. An Episcopal decree of Châlons, in 1676, orders them, moreover, to make an annual retreat of five days, in the month of October, in order that they may the more fully enter into the spirit, and penetrate themselves with the virtues of their calling. In many other dioceses, rules were drawn up for the masters and mistresses ¹, to which they were bound to adhere strictly.

The Bishop of Autun, in 1685, recommends the masters to be impartial and gentle, and to form the children to good manners, to respect for God and their parents; and reminds them that they must not lose sight of the children when they have left the school ², but continue still to watch over them. In a decree of the early years of the eighteenth century, the Bishop of Poitiers advises the school-masters to employ as few corporal punishments as possible ³. Everywhere we see charity and prudence predominant.

Sometimes it was the prelate himself who looked after the carrying out of these rules, as at Castres, where the Bishop visited the town schools twice a week, and those in country places every other month ⁴. But, generally speaking, this duty devolved on the Archdeacon or the Archpriest, who, at certain dates, made a searching enquiry into the schools and their condition ⁵. Numerous reports of these enquiries are to be found in the Episcopal archives; and they constitute one of the richest mines of information concerning the schools of the period.

This supervision of the Archpriest exercised a salutary influence on the masters, as we may judge by the following report drawn up in 1689, for the parish of Chaume, in the diocese of Autun :
 “ The school-master, Jean Royer, is well-informed enough, but he seldom teaches the catechism, and has always been addicted to wine, to quarrelling and blaspheming. The pastor declares,

¹ Diocese of Châlons: *Règlement des maitres* (1676); *Règlement des maitresses* (1685).
 = ² De Charmasse, p. 31. = ³ Buisson, p. 293. = ⁴ Allain, p. 90. = ⁵ Such is the rule prescribed by M^{sr} de Roquette at Autun, in 1686. De Charmasse, p. 35.

nevertheless, that he has improved a little since the Archpriest rebuked him threateningly¹. " There are hundreds of examples like this.

The parish-priest was charged with the immediate inspection of the school; he was bound to visit it frequently, to examine if the lessons were well given, and if Christian doctrine was properly taught, and " not too dryly. " These last words are noteworthy, and may well serve as a guide to catechists. This visit to the schools is especially mentioned in the " Rule of the pastor's day," published in the seventeenth century under the title of *Ecclesiastical Days*. The pastor is to examine the children, " to assure himself that they understand what they are taught, and to encourage them to be industrious by making little presents of pictures or *Agnus Dei* to those who answer best². " It was, in fact, the principle of inspection, preserved in our university laws, and better organized at that period than in the present day. There was the inspection of the Pastor at least once a week, the inspection of the Dean once or twice a year, the inspection of the Bishop during his diocesan visit.

The supervision was, as we see, very strict. It extended to the masters and the books. The masters were warned not to teach the children to read out of " books of fables, of romance, or silly or improper stories, " and above all to avoid such as contained corrupt doctrine and teaching tainted by heresy. There were statutes expressly ordering them to use no books but such as had the Episcopal approbation. But, indeed, as we know, the use and the possession of bad books were forbidden to everybody, even to private individuals. The children were supplied, as nowadays, with primers containing letters, single and in syllables, the usual prayers and the commandments of God. The cross shone on the first page. Some Bishops even took the trouble to compose and have printed special books for children. Thus, the Bishop

¹ De Charmasse, p. 139. = ² *Ordonnance épiscopale de Meaux* (1669). Cf. art. de Maggiolo, diction. de Buisson, p. 724.

of Arras, in 1570, published at Douai a little volume entitled "Christian Childhood," the use of which he recommended.

Some of these books for children are preserved in our public libraries, and are now rare enough to be considered great treasures by bibliographers. The catalogues of the Blue Library enumerate several, amongst them— "the Alphabet" or *Croix de par Dieu*, so named because of the Maltese cross engraved on the front of it; the little Hours, called *longuettes* on account of their form ¹. The "Politeness for children, with the manner of learning to read well, pronounce and write, which we have put at the beginning," was also much used ². At Autun, in 1685, the Bishop commends to the masters "the Christian Pedagogue," "the Pedagogue of the family," "the Good Husbandman," and "the Parish-School" ³.

The last named book, a complete treatise on primary instruction, composed by a priest of one of the parishes of Paris, gives a whole bibliography of school classics the use of which is recommended by the Church ⁴: "Let there also be books that can be used for spiritual reading, such as "Lives of the Saints," by Father Ribadeneyra; the two volumes of "The Flowers of Examples," from which stories for the catechism can be taken; the Catechism of the diocese; some little abridgments of the mysteries of the faith, of Confirmation, of Confession, of Baptism and of Communion, which can be made use of for the children. The *Paradisus Puerorum*, printed at Douay, is also excellent for stories, of which the master should make a good provision, having need of them at every turn; for children retain more easily examples of others like themselves than precepts." The amusements provided for the children at school were likewise submitted to the approval of the Church. The clergy of Troyes, in 1588, petition that "no comedies, tragedies, dialogues or colloquies be represented in the schools of either the towns or the villages, without their being first approved of

¹ *Catalogue des livres de la veuve Jacques Oudot (1711-1742)*. Quoted by Assier. =

² Paris, Richard Breton (1560), small 8vo; numerous editions. = ³ De Charmasse, p. 30.

= ⁴ Allain, p. 173.

the Bishop, his Vicars General, or the vicars and pastors of the place¹. ”

Parents were earnestly entreated to send their children to school. “ If the parishioners or the magistrates,” say the synodal statutes of Arras, in 1584, “ make difficulties for the erection or completion of schools, let recourse be had to the Bishops, or even to the secular arm, and also let parents be compelled to send their sons and their daughters to school, conformably to the edict of the King. ” The synod of Évreux, in 1576, has a similar decree. Masters are requested to be both severe and gentle, and only to use the rod as a last resource. But if the parents get angry, take away their children without reason, or abuse the masters, they may be cited before the Bishop’s tribunal.

“ The parish-priests, ” says the Council of Cambrai in 1631, “ will urge the magistrates and others persons in authority to compel the poor by depriving them of alms, and others by various means, to send their children and their servants to the Sunday-school and to catechism. ”

The Church does not absolutely object to compulsory education; she only stands out against it when it is used to banish religion from the schools; but the force she employs is only a moral one, and never goes beyond withdrawing assistance from such families as refuse to see after the instruction of their children. She leaves to the municipalities the system of fines, as it was practised at Lille in 1585². Her real means are far more powerful and adapted to the sanction of a purely moral obligation—the authority, for instance, which belongs to the voice of the Bishop in a Christian community; the stigmatizing as “ a grave sin ” the negligence of parents concerning the instruction of their children³; the threat of depriving of the sacraments those who don’t send their children to school⁴.

The Church did not forget that in order to induce children to

¹ Babeau, *le Village*, p. 269. = ² De Resbecq, pp. 329 and 401. = ³ Buisson, p. 279, *Ordonnance de l’évêque de Saint-Malo* (1550). = ⁴ Lhuillier, p. 57, *Ordonnance de l’évêque de Toul* (1693).

frequent the schools, it was necessary to let the expense of schooling fall as lightly as possible on the families of the poor.

Free instruction has, consequently, always been one of the principal preoccupations of the Church — not that illusory freedom



Ed. GARNIER del.

Coming out of school in the eighteenth century. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, from Augustin de Saint-Aubin; engraved by Méaulle.

which consists in making every body, rich and poor, pay for the education of the children, whatever be the fortune of the parents; but really free education, that which rests upon charitable foundations, and not on concealed taxes. Therefore does the Church encourage to the utmost the endowment of schools.

The recommendations of the Bishops on this head are extraordinarily urgent; the pastors and vicars are ordered to remind the sick and the dying when making their will not to forget "the Director of the schools, who is in some sort the Father of the Republic¹." The prelates carefully defend the interests of the establishments devoted to education: "All holders of school property," says the synod of Évreux in 1576, "shall restore them within two months, under pain of excommunication. All the masters supported by foundations shall, within two months, come and reside in their parishes and reopen their schools. If they are incompetent, or of bad will, they must immediately give up their place. Wherever there is not a school, one shall be opened within two months with a fitting salary for the master. "The administrators of hospitals, asylums and lazarettos, shall allot to these foundations a portion of the property they manage. The confraternities and vestries shall include the support of the schools in their expenses." Finally, if the money be not forthcoming, the Church herself will provide it.

We may quote here the rules presented by the Bishop of Châlons, in 1662, to the Assembly of archdeacons, deans and rural promoters of his diocese: "Take every year a certain sum of money on the revenue of the church-wardens, with the advice of the rural dean and one of the leading parishioners, to help to provide a school-master in places where the poverty of the people prevents their having one, without, however, doing any damage to such payments and services as the church-wardens are responsible for. If you can yourself contribute to the support of the school-master, bestow this alms in preference to others that are not so needed or so pressing. Induce such persons as wish to found good works for the Church to give their money to this charity, and advise the dying to leave a yearly sum by will for this object, representing to them affectionately the excellence and great merit of the charity. Exhort powerfully and unceasingly, in public and

¹ Synod of Évreux (1576).

in private, fathers and mothers of families to send their children to school as soon as they are of age, setting greater store by their instruction than by the slight expense it will put them to. In a word, leave nothing undone that depends on your zeal to procure the establishment of a good school-master in your parishes. ”

Docile to these exhortations and persuaded that, as the Bishop of Arras said in 1678, “ the greatest charity you can do the poor is to procure them the means of being instructed, ” the municipal authorities often stipulate in their agreements with the masters that instruction shall be given gratis “ for the love of God to those who are notoriously poor, ” or who have “ to beg for their living¹. ”

At Verdun-sur-Garonne, in 1647, “ it was represented by the sire Lamothe, consul, that the instruction of youth is one of the greatest gains that can fall to the community of that town, that there is a college to teach boys, and it is desirable that means be found to teach girls, seeing that many are lost for want of instruction. ” And the council decides forthwith on opening a free primary school for girls, under the direction of the sisters of the Ave Maria².

But the Church, with that admirable delicacy which characterizes all her charities, fears to wound the pride of the poor in throwing education to them like a crust of bread to a beggar. She speaks very strongly on this point, and the synodal statutes of Châlons in 1673, and of Aleth in 1675, remind the masters to “ treat poor boys with as much consideration as rich ones, and to pay the same attention to their education³. ”

All through the seventeenth century, Bishops, and holy priests, and zealous missionaries, not satisfied with pleading on behalf of the schools, found schools themselves. M^{sr} Vialart de Herse, Bishop of Châlons, devoted himself so actively to this work, that “ in a short time, ” say his biographer, “ there was not a parish in his diocese for which he did not procure this boon. M^{sr} de Maupas du Tour, assisted by M. de Lantages, in the bishopric of Puy; J. Galard

¹ Allain, p. 192; *Inventaire des archives d'Albi*, CC, 237. = ² *Inventaire des archives de Verdun-sur-Garonne (Tarn-et-Garonne)*, BB, 2. = ³ Allain, p. 191.

and F. Chollet, in Anjou; J. Gallemant, at Pontoise and at Aumale; Michel le Nobletz, in Britany, all open schools¹.

The instruction of girls is the object of the constant solicitude of the Church. It was too often overlooked. If, at rare intervals, we come upon a parish, such as Conches and Argilly, where there is a teacher for girls² and none for boys, it is an exceptional case, whereas the contrary is of frequent occurrence. The Bishops are grieved by this state of things, and leave nothing undone to remedy it. "It now remains," writes M^{sr} Séguier, in 1668, to the aldermen of Meaux, "to provide for the instruction of girls, which, in my opinion, is a matter of the highest importance, and most worthy of the episcopal solicitude, inasmuch as your daughters, having received a sound education, will be capable, as mothers of families, of communicating this advantage to their children. This consideration has led me to entertain a proposal for the establishment of a monastery of Ursuline Nuns in the town of Meaux, a thing which I could not decide without your consent³."

At Macon in 1615, at Senlis in 1629, at Toulon in 1686, the Bishop opens a school "for poor girls⁴." In Paris, M. Olier is busy about others in the parish of Saint-Sulpice, and founds a House of Instruction, a kind of "workshop where all sorts of manual labour was taught to young girls who had left school⁵."

Private individuals did not remain deaf to the urgent solicitations of the Church, nor insensible to the example of so many pious ecclesiastics. In a great number of parishes, there were free schools that had cost nothing to the State, and that cost the parents of the children nothing. An unknown benefactor gave both the house for the children, and funds for the payment of the masters—an excellent example, and one that might be followed with good effect in our day.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the foundations noted

¹ Allain, p. 89 and following. = ² De Charmasse, p. 134 and following. = ³ Lhuillier, p. 41. See the recommendations of the Bishops of Beauvais and of Noyon (1680); Morel, pp. 99 and 100. = ⁴ Rameau, p. 179; *Archives de Toulon*, GG, 54; Morel, p. 134. = ⁵ Allain, p. 244.

by learned men who, of late years, have made a study of the history of primary education. We will just select a few of them from the long lists of charitable institutions created for girls in the seventeenth century : at Amiens in 1676, at Brienne in 1653, at Caylus in 1678, at Dammartin-en-Goëlle, at Liancourt in 1685, at Magnac-Laval in 1689, at Nogent-sur-Seine in 1685, at Picquigny in 1688, at Saint-Bris in 1695, at Saint-Denis-la-Chevassé in 1696, at Saint-Maur in 1672¹.

Often we see an inscription recalling the memory of the founder to the succeeding generations who come to pray in the church. The collection of Guilhermy, for the diocese of Paris, contains a quantity of documents of this nature found at Lhay in 1591, at Pin in 1603, at Vaugirard in 1612, at Servon in 1653, at Ferrolles in 1662, at Grigny in 1671, and at Gennevilliers in 1687. The inscription which sets forth the foundation made at Étioles in 1679 by Marie Gargan, widow of Jean Guénégaud, sieur des Brosses, is particularly interesting : “ The said lady has founded in this parish a school for children of both sexes, the master of which shall be a layman, named and chosen of good life and morals by the said lady during her life-time, and afterwards by her sons-in-law and her daughters; if he is married, his wife will teach the girls. The master will instruct the children of the said place gratis in the faith and the Catholic religion, will teach them to read, write, sing in church, and will treat them *gently and politely*. ”

This blossoming out of charity seems to have nowhere flourished so magnificently as at Lille. It is not in these days only that this city has given an example of devotion to all grand and soul-stirring enterprises. The mere enumeration of the schools that were founded there since the fifteenth century will give an idea of the noble emulation which fired the inhabitants of Lille in the cause of the education of children.

There are the Good Daughters, or Orphans of the Conception, and the Orphans of the Grange, established in 1477; the Gray Sisters

¹ Allain, p. 194; Babeau, p. 45; Buisson, pp. 108, 1598, 2396; Darsy, p. 28; Galabert, p. 8; Lhuillier, p. 39; Morel, pp. 111 and 113; Quantin, p. 28.

in 1480; the school of the Grisons, opened in 1554 by Hubert Délit, for eighty boys and twenty girls; the Bapaume school, founded by Guillaume de Boilleux under the same conditions; the Ursulines, installed in 1638; the Orphanage of the Presentation, in 1646, where "several poor and honest orphan girls were taught Christian doctrine, reading, writing and manual work;" the Stappaert school or Hospital of Our Lady of Dolors, founded in 1656 for the education of ten girls; the free school of Good Sons, founded in 1670; the schools created by J. Leiglart and Denis Franquet, the first for girls, the second for boys, in 1686; the school of Saint-Joseph, endowed in 1688 by Jeanne Romary, to take in girls, and finally Sunday-schools for those who were occupied earning their bread on week-days. The ministers general of the purse for the poor had the administration of these innumerable establishments¹.

The great current of charity which led to the foundation of hospitals also fed the stream that was flowing towards free education for the poor.

The Church did not overlook the children brought up in the hospitals. The Council of Toulouse, in 1590, entreats that in "the hospitals and other pitiful places" where a great many little boys and girls are gathered together, they be taught the catechism and the alphabet. The directors of these institutions do not neglect this charitable office, and we see the Blind Asylum of Quinze-Vingts, in 1428, paying a master to teach the little children there².

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the old hospitals, fallen into ruin, were thrown into one large establishment, charity schools were founded in almost every town, and centres of relief for the poor were opened.

Aymon de Chissé, in 1425, is inspired by the sentiments of Christian charity which were moving others to these acts of compassion. This Bishop of Grenoble opens a school in a hospital

¹ De Resbecq, p. 223 and following. = ² *Archives des Quinze-Vingts*, register 6350, n° 32. This Asylum was founded by Louis IX. It was called Quinze-Vingts, because three hundred was the number it was originally destined to shelter.

that he had founded himself, where six poor children are fed and taught, who, "when they know how to read perfectly," are to make way for others¹.

In the succeeding centuries, this blending of the hospital and the school becomes universal. At Rouen, in 1555, the Committee of the poor founds four schools to teach children "to fear and love God, the creed and the commandments of the law, their little book, reading, writing and principally good manners."

In 1556, two more are founded for girls, and it was at the head of these schools that M. Nyel, a friend of Blessed de la Salle, was afterwards placed. In this same town of Rouen and at Lille, the administrators of the Charity Committee lay it as an obligation on parents to send their children to school; at Lyons, they distribute relief in bread and clothes to poor scholars². At Mayenne, a Charity Committee, founded by the Duc de la Meilleraye, organizes schools in all the parishes³. At Vezelay, in 1607, the administrators of the hospitals treat with the "rector of the schools" for the instruction of the youth of the town. At Sceaux, in 1670, the school-master "lives at the Maison-Dieu⁴." Finally, we see the schools annexed to the hospitals at Amiens, at Dijon in 1608, at Saint-Malo, in 1646, at Blois, in 1657, at Angers, at Compiègne, at Senlis, and in a score of other towns⁵.

In those towns where poverty was always rampant, this diffusion of gratuitous instruction was further supplemented by the help of parochial charities. The priests were admirably zealous in founding Sunday schools for apprentices and servants, and charity schools for the poor children whose parents could not pay the few pence charged by the masters in payment for their lessons⁶.

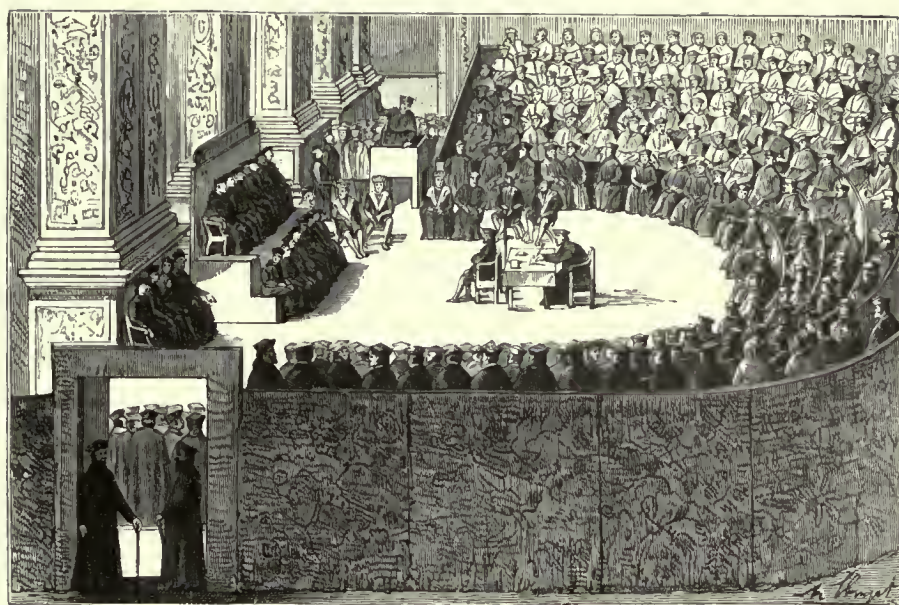
¹ *Notice historique sur Aymon de Chissé*, by Bulet; Lyon, 1880, in-8°. = ² Allain, pp. 79 and 180; De Beaurepaire, t. II, p. 289 and following. = ³ Allain, p. 113. =

⁴ De Charmasse, pp. 24 and 117. = ⁵ Allain, *Revue des questions historiques*, t. XVII (1875), p. 130; Buisson, pp. 279, 336, 2180; *Inventaire des archives de Dijon*, F. 49; Morel, p. 98; C. Port, *Dictionnaire historique de Maine-et-Loire*, t. I, p. 546. =

⁶ See chapter III. on *les Écoles de Paris*; for Amiens, Darsy, p. 30; for Douai, de Resbecq, p. 404; for Beauvais, Morel, p. 98 and following.

The moment has now come when the mission of Blessed de la Salle is about to be prepared by more direct and immediate action. It is being prepared by the multiplication of schools, by a crowd of foundations in which we can retrace the features of the future work, by men of genius and by Saints whose idea Blessed de la Salle will complete, and whose scheme he will enlarge. This is what we shall see in the following chapter.

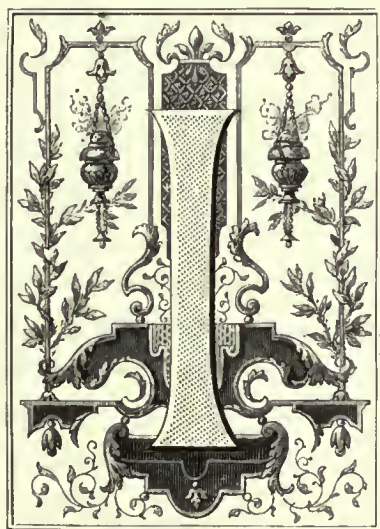




Trent. — A sitting of the Council which had a decisive influence on the question of the schools (pp. 36, 75 and following).
— Drawn by Hubert Clerget, from a document of the period; engraved by Barbant.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRECURSORS AND PREDECESSORS OF BLESSED DE LA SALLE.



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It has been clearly shown in the foregoing pages that former ages never had that contempt for education of which our ignorance is apt to accuse them. Schools, even those devoted to the children of the poor, were then numerous and flourishing, and, in some provinces, they were even more numerous than at the present day. Unfortunately, the traces of them become more and more indistinct as we ascend the stream of time. But, throughout the last two centuries, they are definitely visible, and the proofs of their existence placed beyond all doubt. The reports of the bishops in their diocesan

visitations bear witness alike to the solicitude of the Church and the success of her efforts. These documents have more than any others helped to establish statistics whose testimony speaks louder than any other.

We shall set down here some of these figures for the seventeenth century, the period to which our research is more especially directed as being that in which the Brothers of Blessed de la Salle made their appearance.

The multiplication of schools was, we have asserted, amongst the providential preparations made for the mission of Blessed de la Salle. At Angers, each one of the seventeen parishes had its own school, supported by some charitable foundation, and the majority of the diocesan Communes had theirs too¹.

In the districts surrounding Auxerre, we can name sixty-six where the children had a master². The four hundred and forty-six Communes of Aube possessed at least two hundred and eleven schools in the seventeenth century; at the end of the eighteenth, they had increased to four hundred and twenty³.

In fourteen Archpresbyteries of the diocese of Autun, which contained three hundred and eighty-two parishes, M. de Charmasse proves the existence of two hundred and two schools⁴. In 1675, the four hundred and ninety-three parishes of the diocese of Coutances only included one hundred and four schools for boys and thirty-two for girls; but through the zeal of M^r Loménie de Brienne and his successors they multiplied considerably in the following century⁵.

The diocese of Langres was more favored, and M. Fayet points out, in 1680, two hundred and thirty-five schools, out of five hundred and fifty communes, in that part of the diocese alone which takes in the county of Haute-Marne⁶.

At Lyons, in 1688, there were no less than seventy-six schools, six-and-twenty for boys, three-and-thirty for girls, and seventeen

¹ Buisson, p. 1766. = ² Quantin, p. 64. = ³ Babeau, *l'Instruction primaire*, p. 64; *le Village*, p. 271. = ⁴ De Charmasse, p. 104. = ⁵ Allain, p. 57. = ⁶ Fayet, p. 23.

mixed; but in the neighboring counties education was not so flourishing. The Lyonnais, out of one hundred and eighty-four parishes, had only forty schools, and Forez twenty-nine out of two hundred and forty-nine¹. The Bishopric of Montpellier, composed of ninety-seven parishes, contained, in 1684, fifty-seven schools for boys and thirty-seven for girls². At Rheims, every parish had its school-master, chosen by the assembled parishioners. The surrounding villages were largely supplied with masters³.

Primary instruction was always held in great honor in Normandy, and that province has had the good fortune to have its history written by the author of one of the best monographs on schools that have been published. In 1683, in the Deanery of Foucarmont, there were twenty-two schools in thirty-eight Communes, and, in 1687, forty-two out of fifty-six in the Deaneries of Havre, of Loges and Saint-Romain. In this region, as elsewhere, an immense improvement becomes visible from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Out of eleven hundred and fifty-nine rural parishes visited by the Archbishop of Rouen, from 1710 to 1717, eight hundred and fifty-five were provided with schools, only three hundred and four being without them; three hundred and six had schools for boys and girls. But it is to be observed that in those days the parishes were far more numerous than they are now. Thus, in Seine-Inférieure, there were a thousand municipalities in 1790, and, owing to successive annexations, there are now only seven hundred and fifty-nine. Many parishes, then separate, but now joined to others, could consequently at that period profit by the school of the neighboring parishes of which they now form part.

In the same diocese, out of thirty-four parishes which contain the ancient Deanery of Fauville, twenty-four had schools, and the ten that had none are still without any⁴.

M. Maggiolo has come upon documents relating to one hundred

¹ Buisson, pp. 1757 to 1759. = ² Id., p. 1505. = ³ Allain, p. 64. = ⁴ De Beaurepaire, t. II, p. 382 and following.

and seventy-six schools of the diocese of Toul in the seventeenth century, and to eighty-two of the diocese of Verdun; the first of these bishoprics included two hundred and fourteen parishes, and one hundred and five annexes; the second, one hundred and eighty-six parishes and seventy-two annexes.

These school-rooms, opened to children all over France, did not remain empty. It is true that in certain country parts the parents did not show much zeal in taking advantage of the opportunities offered to them¹; but when we light by chance on any bits of information concerning the frequentation of the schools, we see that this neglect was by no means general.

The school of Bergues, in 1651, received eighty poor children; the schools of Cambrai, nine hundred and sixty-five; the Ursuline Nuns and the Sisters of Ernemont, at Dieppe, each taught five hundred little scholars in the seventeenth century. At Dijon, towards the close of the fifteenth century, more than two thousand children frequented the grammar school; at Douay, in 1615, five or six hundred children had lessons from six mistresses; at Forest, they reckoned one hundred and ten pupils during the winter. At Lille, in 1613, there was a deficit of two thousand five hundred pounds in the school accounts "because of the great number of children who attended the said schools. And amongst these, are reckoned twelve hundred of the very poor, who, being in receipt of alms, were threatened with the privation of this relief if they failed to send their children to be instructed²." The municipal schools of Montauban, from 1536, dispensed knowledge to over fifteen hundred pupils³; those of the parish of Saint-Victor, at Metz, received two hundred boys and sixty girls⁴.

It is difficult to judge of the results obtained by the masters. The proportion of contracting parties who sign their marriage deeds furnishes a certain amount of evidence; but this is not to

¹ "The parishioners do not take care of the instruction of their children." *Synod of Toul* (1690). Cf. A. Oll, *Un Mot sur l'instruction primaire*, p. 7. = ² Allain, p. 176 and following. *Inventaire des archives de Dijon*, F. 1. = ³ Buisson, p. 2860. = ⁴ Maggiolo, *Pouillé de Metz*, p. 68.

be relied upon altogether, for it is no uncommon thing even in these days to find in country places persons who can sign their names, and yet who do not know how to write¹.

As to the knowledge of reading, it is impossible to form an estimate of the extent to which it spread. And yet the quantity of publications issued by the Blue Library, and which assuredly were not intended for a learned or cultivated public, would seem to prove that the peasants and workmen were fond of seeking relaxation from their labors by reading of an evening the adventures of ancient heroes and the legends of the Saints. Indeed, the programme of the masters of that period, which we accuse of ignorance, was sometimes very ambitious. In the diocese of Rhodéz, where, from the fourteenth century, little villages were provided with schools, grammar was taught, and logic, a little Latin and sometimes music. According to a decree of a Bishop of Rhodéz in the sixteenth century, the children were to learn accent and quantity, and know how to read Latin, in prose and verse².

In a word, when no one as yet gave a thought to the instruction of the people, the Church was actively and extraordinarily zealous on the subject. Thanks to her unceasing care, France was amply endowed with primary schools where the children were taught pretty much the same things that they learn in those of to-day, and where they were instructed above all in that Christian doctrine which is the foundation of individual and social morality. The Church, without burdening the State or the parents with any expense, had founded and kept up a great many of these schools. She gave them rules, the outcome of such ripe experience that their main points have been retained in the laws of existing universities. She held them under a discipline at once firm and

¹ The following results in 76 counties are given by M. Maggiolo. The number of contracting parties who signed their marriage deed from 1686 to 1690 amounts on an average to a little more than 19 0/0; but it varies much according to places. The most favored regions are the Hautes-Alpes (45,65 0/0), Calvados (41,85); the signatures grow rare in Ariège (3,68 0/0), and the Landes (4,68). But these statistics, more than others, must be taken as merely approximative. (Maggiolo, *État récapitulatif*, etc.; Paris, 1879, in-4°.) = ² *Journal officiel*, June 3d 1887. *Compte rendu des Sociétés savantes*. Communicated by M. Lempereur.

gentle, and now we shall see how, after having created the schools, she endeavoured to train the teachers.

The chief obstacle to the diffusion of education was, indeed, the insufficiency of teachers.

The clergy, absorbed by the duties of their ministry, gave only an inadequate amount of time to popular instruction. Here and there, a few parish-priests or vicars do duty as school-masters, as, for instance, at Rheims, where, in 1658, "the greater number of priests keep school for little children, by means of which they live," and in the diocese of Rouen, where, in 1710, ninety-four schools are kept by the parish-priests, two hundred and seventy-four by the vicars and deacons, and four hundred and fifty by clerical students and laymen¹. But, after all, the priests were for the most part obliged to confine themselves to teaching the catechism. In spite of the urgent representations of the provincial councils and the diocesan synods, the pastor of a small parish could not shut himself up from morning till night in a school-room, teaching little children to read, and neglecting the church, the religious services, the sick, the poor, and the business of the parish. In the larger parishes, it is true, there were vicars; but there the work also was heavier, and was divided amongst them. The most that could be done was to tell off one of them to overlook the school, without obliging him to take the class himself. There were, indeed, certain parishes where the vicar received his stipend only on condition of teaching in the school; but this was exceptional. Teaching is an absorbing occupation, which demands the sacrifice of a man's whole time.

¹ It was the same at Asnières (1681), Cussy (1700), Origny (1681) and Saint-Didier (1670), in the diocese of Autun; at Reignac (1636), Saint-Girons-d'Aiguesvives and Saint-Sulpice-de-la-Fosse, in the diocese of Bordeaux; at Accolay (1673), Merry-Sec, Merry-sur-Yonne and Sainpuits (1679), in the region which corresponds to our department of Yonne.— Allain, pp. 65 and 265; De Beaurepaire, *l. c.*; De Charmasse, p. 134 and following; Lhuillier, p. 20; Quantin, pp. 64, 93, 94.

It was, therefore, necessary to have recourse to laymen, and as there was no institution which trained them for the work, the first who offered himself was accepted. Sometimes the candidate was an aspirant to the priesthood, who, on the threshold of the sanctuary, had given up his high vocation; sometimes it was a pettifogging lawyer, who, finding he could make no way in his profession, took to playing at school-master. Occasionally, a peasant, somewhat less of a dunce than his neighbors, undertook to teach the rising generation the little that he knew; then again, we see the parish fiddler installed in the pedagogue's chair, and interrupting his learned lectures to go and fiddle for a wedding in the village.

Very often, the school-master, finding it impossible to make a living out of his school, supplements it by some other profession, some manual labor or small trade; at Lyons, in 1685, a retired publican and the wife of an inn-keeper undertake the office of teachers¹.

At an other place, a vagabond, whom the King pardons² for some gross misdemeanor, and elsewhere a stranger arrested on his journey, are invested with the rank and office of a school-master. A boy of fourteen is charged to teach the children in one village, and an old woman in another. Generally speaking, despite the prohibitions of the Church, the Royal commands and the decrees of Parliament, the school is mixed; boys and girls are huddled together in the same school-rooms, and this leads to evil results. In the more privileged parishes, a wife, a mother, or a sister of the master takes charge of the girls' class, as at Mercueil and at Mâcon³. Few Communes are rich enough to be able to afford two separate and distinct schools.

The teaching body was, therefore, it will be seen, far below its mission, and pedantry is, unfortunately, by no means the gravest charge that La Fontaine was justified in bringing against the poor pedagogue of the seventeenth century⁴. Abbé Demia, director

¹ Buisson, p. 1757. = ² Siméon Luce, *Lettre de rémission d'Étienne Cappel* (1478). Bulletin of the Society of the History of Paris, 1882, quoted by Lhuillier, p. 20. = ³ De Charmasse, pp. 125 and 198; Rameau, p. 179. = ⁴ Book I, fable 19.

general of schools at Lyons, declares that "the greater number of mistresses are ignorant not only of the best method of reading and writing, but of the very principles of religion; that



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — St Ignatius Loyola, from a document preserved in the Print department.
— Drawn by Édouard Garnier, engraved by Trichon.

amongst the masters there are heretics, impious men who have followed infamous callings, and under whose guidance the young are in evident danger of being lost."

These complaints are general. The Bishop of Toul sums up the list of the habitual faults of school-masters. "They are gamblers,

drunkards, libertines, brutes. They pass their days in the wine-



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle.—St Vincent of Paul, statue by Émilien Cabuchet, in the church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris.
— Engraved by Pannemaker, borrowed from the *Saint Vincent de Paul*, of Arthur Loth (Dumoulin, publisher).

shops playing cards, and in places of amusement, and fiddling at

the village festivals. In the churches, they do not dress modestly, and instead of applying themselves to the sacred chanting, they sing whatever comes into their head during the services¹. " If they are assiduous at the school, they are too often incompetent, and can teach the children nothing. Or else, they are heretics, won over to the new sects, and they become instruments of perdition for the young souls that are entrusted to them. One Bishop whose diocese was not extensive, admitted that he had been compelled to dismiss twelve school-masters for having corrupted the children. This explains why the Church was so severe towards teachers; why she reserved to herself the right to name them or to revoke them, why she kept such strict watch on them throughout the year. She was always divided between the fear of leaving the children without any instruction, and the terror of seeing them fall into bad hands.

Teaching is not, however, confided everywhere to such unworthy persons. In many places, the masters are mentioned as " honorable men," and assuredly they deserve the title, the members of those dynasties of teachers, who, from father to son, devote themselves to the instruction of youth, as likewise those notaries, recorders, lawyers who consecrate to the noble work the leisure left them by their professional duties².

The Church sometimes has the joy of testifying her gratitude to the zealous mistresses who come to her aid in teaching the little ones. At Thoste, for instance, according to the report of the diocesan visitation of Autun in 1671³, " there were no schools for the instruction of youth; but a good old widow instructs some little boys and girls, and teaches them Christian doctrine with great zeal, being very capable of this employment, and of keeping the children in order." At Metz-le-Comte, in 1667, dame Louise Brissa, wife of M^e Jean Perrève, practitioner of the place, became a teacher out of charity⁴. At Saint-Georges-sur-Loire, in 1687,

¹ Statuts synodaux of 1686. = ² Allain, p. 136 and following; Duissou, p. 2934. =

³ De Charmasse, p. 180. = ⁴ Id., p. 199.

“ Catherine Ravigné, school-mistress, is buried in presence of all the Chapter, with the esteem of all the parishioners for the charitable services she had rendered to every one ¹. ” The information collected concerning the teachers of the Archpresbytery of Avallon, at the end of the seventeenth century, is excellent². The sad lack of masters is not felt everywhere : at Montesquiou, in 1655, several persons present themselves for the office, and at Bourbourg, in 1674, there are as many as fourteen candidates³.

The pastoral letter of M^r Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, for the year 1668⁴, seems to give a just estimate of the character of the masters of that day, some of whom were excellent, some mediocre, and some detestable : “ We have the consolation of possessing primary schools in many parishes where the masters and mistresses do a great deal of good by the teaching they give the children;... but we have also the pain of seeing many in other places who are of hardly any use for their salvation. These teachers content themselves with merely showing the children how to read. ”

It was, therefore, necessary to train and discipline the masters. This was to be the work of the religious and secular congregations.

Nothing can exceed the fecundity of these congregations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Council of Trent renovated the spirit of Christendom, and faith, purified and regulated by discipline, produced a superabundance of vocations. Teaching and charitable congregations above all increased. In France

¹ Allain, p. 146. = ² De Charmasse, p. 115. = ³ Allain, p. 133.— The candidates, unfortunately, did not always possess serious claims, and the municipal body of Buys can hardly have been much impressed by the following petition : — “ *Messieurs les consuls, j'entends que vostre maistre d'escolle s'en va, que me faiet vous escrire la présente, pour vous faire entendre la voullanté que j'e aurois vous aller fere serveisse pour l'instruction de vostre jeunesse à bonnes mœurs, à lysre en latin et en françois, en toutes sortes de lettres. Quant à la grammerre, je n'y suis point fondé, forsque le commencement de conjuguer et construire quelques riègles de Pellysson. Et avanceray aussi bien vos enffans de mon petit savoir, sans rien tourmenter les enffans.* ” (Lacroix, p. 16.) The spelling, which makes the point of the quotation and the peculiar merit of this remarkable document, is absolutely untranslatable. = ⁴ Allain, p. 109.

alone, we see *fifty* arise in less than *a hundred and fifty years*, and every one of them, after struggling through the inevitable trials of their beginnings, founded branch houses on every side where the poor were relieved, the sick tended, and children were taught the rudiments of profane and Divine science. No words could adequately depict the beauty of this Catholic harvest. Every province produces wonders. Every diocese has its own sap, and gives birth to its own congregations, adapted to the special needs of the people. Among these may be mentioned the Ursulines, who, founded in Italy, in 1535, by Angela de Merici, are introduced into France in 1596, and in 1789 number over nine thousand; the Religious of Our Lady, founded in 1600 by Blessed Peter Fourrier of Mattaincourt, one of the most far-seeing men of his day, who declared that primary instruction was "the thing most necessary and fitting for the age" in which he lived¹; the Daughters of Our Lady, founded at Bordeaux, in 1607, by Jeanne de Lestonac, niece of Montaigne and Marquise de Montferrand, who at her death left forty flourishing educational establishments; the Religious of the Visitation, who, founded by St Francis of Sales and St Jeanne de Chantal in 1610, possessed, in 1641, eighty-seven houses, and in 1789 numbered, in France alone, seven thousand nuns; the Daughters of the Cross, established, in 1625, at Roye in Picardy, and who take their name from the trials which attend their community at its birth. Few things are more touching than the early beginnings of these last-named nuns. At Roye, a school-master is dismissed for a grave misdemeanour. Four young girls at once volunteer to continue his work, and rescue the little ones from grievous dangers.

Under the direction of their parish-priest they assemble in a poor, tumble-down house, with no help but the protection of the Blessed Virgin and St Joseph, and there, renouncing the joys of family life, they divide their time between prayer, education and manual work. This poor little foundation, persecuted as well as

¹ R. de Beaurepaire, t. II, p. 227.

poor, soon covers the face of Picardy with its pious houses, where children are born anew to Christian life. Its branches extended to Paris, and the admirable Institute of the Daughters of the Cross, of Mme de Villeneuve, who train teachers for the rural schools, becomes the primitive model of our normal schools.



Predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — M. Tronson, priest of Saint-Sulpice (p. 78), from the portrait by Guerry.
— Engraved by Méaulle, from a copper-plate by Duflos.

In 1625, also, Jeanne Chezard du Matel founds the Congregation of Ladies of the Incarnate Word. The following year sees the foundation of the Sisters of the Presentation. The Ladies of the School of Jesus, afterwards called "Religious of Our Lady of Peace," are settled at Provins in 1630, and at Coulommiers¹ in 1637. In 1633, St Vincent of Paul institutes the Sisters of Charity, who have become the type copied by almost all charitable

¹ Lhuillier, p. 39.

congregations of women. It is hardly necessary to add that in many countries they combine the instruction of children with the care of the sick; this they did for the first time at Fontainebleau in 1646, and later in a hundred other towns and villages¹.

In 1636, Mme de Miramion founds the Daughters of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, and joins them to the community founded by Françoise de Blosset in 1632, "to instruct little girls and train teachers for the country schools, and to shelter and feed these latter for a time²."

In 1647, the Daughters and Widows of the Christian Union are founded.

In 1648, some pious women in the parish of Saint-Sulpice form themselves into an association to receive orphans of both sexes, and this is the germ from which springs the Congregation of the Mother of God, to which, in 1810, Napoleon I. was to confide the direction of the school of the Legion of Honor.

In 1650, we see arise almost simultaneously the Sisters of Saint-Joseph, in Puy en Velay; the Sisters of the Faith, at Agen; the Sisters of Christian Union, at Fontenay-le-Comte. Foundations increase so rapidly that language is at a loss for new names to distinguish them, and they are at last obliged to borrow their titles one from another.

In 1665, the *Béates* and the Ladies of Instruction are established at Puy, where, to the present day, the latter continue to be one of the pillars of Christian life. M. Tronson, of Saint-Sulpice, was their founder, Mlle Martel carrying out his idea practically—neither one nor the other of them, as it so often happens with the servants of God, dreaming of the great things that were to come of their lowly work. M. Tronson's idea was simply to instil some notions of Christian truth into the minds of the young girls of his parish; he spoke of it to one of his penitents, who interested others in the work. And in this way were grouped together the Ladies of

¹ Lhuillier, p. 41. The same, at Saint-Quentin (1698). Cf. Morel, p. 138. = ² Allain, p. 280.

Instruction; they went from house to house, from neighbor to neighbor; they persuaded the young girls employed in lace-making to join prayer to work; to sing canticles while they threw the shuttle, and to adopt a rule of Christian life in the world. Soon these pious women were too few for their work, and had to call in helps. They formed teachers who settled in the villages and hamlets to spread instruction under the vigilant supervision of the parish-priest. Without being bound by any vow, without forming part of any congregation, they wore a particular costume, and were restricted to certain rules. They were the guardian angels of the village, bringing up the children, watching over the young girls, nursing the sick, assisting the dying, and thus, unknown to the world, accomplishing that blessed mission which has saved the faith in France through all her revolutions. The *Menettes*, in the diocese of Saint-Flour, and the *Filles régentes* of Aleth, who went about in the winter time teaching the young girls in the country places, were equally devoted¹.

All the provinces in France had their own congregations, created in the first instance for the special needs of the town or the diocese, and gradually growing and stretching forth their branches until there is no room left anywhere for ignorance. In 1662, the congregation of the Sisters of Providence, founded by Antonin de la Haye, pastor of Saint-Amand of Rouen, soon spreads all over France; in 1666, comes the congregation of the Ladies of Saint-Maur, founded by Father Barré, and in 1671 that of the Sisters of the Charity Schools, founded by M^{lle} de Houdemare²; in 1679, appear the Sisters of Charity of Evreux, founded by M^{me} Tulard, and who had ninety houses when the Revolution broke out. The same year, in the Ardennes, arise the Daughters of Providence, founded by M^{lle} Morel, for the gratuitous instruction of girls, both rich and poor, in Arches and Charleville. In 1680, the Sisters of Charity of Christian Instruction are founded by Dom de Laveyne at Saint-Saulze, in the diocese of Nevers, and in 1789 number no

¹ Allain, pp. 103 and 282. = ² De Beaurepaire, vol. II, p. 236 and following.

fewer than one hundred and twenty houses; the Sisters of Charity of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin begin with a little school opened by Mother Poussepin at Angerville, in 1684; in 1689, the Sisters of the Christian Schools of Saint-Charles are installed at Lyons



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — St Joseph Calasantiua (p. 64). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, engraved by Trichon from a document of J. Mansfeld.

by abbé Demia; in 1690, the Sisters of Saint-Maurice of Chartres, and of the Hospital of Ernemont spread themselves all over Normandy¹. In 1696, we have the Daughters of the Blessed Virgin of Rennes; and, in 1698, the Daughters of Our Lady at Tourcoing, and the Ladies of the Charity Schools of Saint-Charles, at Nantes; and finally

¹ R. de Beaurepaire, vol. II, p. 230.

in 1699, the Sisters of Saint Paul of Treguier, founded by that *Mme* du Parc de Gezerdo, who was the intimate friend of *Mme* de Maintenon.



Ed GARNIER del.

TRICHON sculp.

The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — The Venerable Cesar de Bus (p. 85). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Trichon, from an engraving of Charpignon.

The eighteenth century is no less productive than the seventeenth, and would furnish a catalogue equally beautiful and rich. Amongst other institutions, we may mention the Sisters of Providence of Portien, in the Vosges; the Sisters of Providence of

Evreux; in 1702, the Congregation of the Good Saviour, at Caen; in 1712, the Sisters of Christian Doctrine, or Vatelottes, in Lorraine, so called after their founder abbé Vatelot; the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament in 1715, in the Vivarais; the Daughters of Wisdom in Vendée; the Sisters of Charity, in the diocese of Chartres; the Sisters of Saint Roch, in the diocese of Limoges; the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, at Mâcon; the Sisters of Mercy, in lower Normandy. Even during the hurricane of the Revolution, new congregations arise, and the old ones spread and multiply. In a word, when the Revolution broke out, there were in France eighty thousand religious, nuns and sisters, a certain number of whom had consecrated themselves wholly to prayer and penance, but the majority of whom were given up to teaching and charity.

A dry list of names can give no idea of this expansion of Catholic charity any more than the nomenclature of a herbal could convey a true notion of the beauty of the flowering meadows and the green forests where the plants were culled. In order to admire these works in all their splendour, it would be necessary to go through the touching annals of each, perusing them page by page, and studying those vocations that come to souls in such wonderful ways—now to the simple maid working in the fields, now to the young girl surrounded by the brilliant pleasures of fortune, and attracting from such various points of social life to the lowly path of charity souls so widely separated by education, by character and by natural tastes. It would be necessary to study the rules of these various congregations, and to see with what care and wisdom the founders seek to train the souls and the minds of children. “Let them be taught,” says Blessed Peter Fourrier, “Christian doctrine, horror of sin, the love of virtue; but also to read and write, to do sums, to sew and to do those many manual works that are useful and fit for girls. In order to proceed in all this with greater order, profit and ease, the whole school shall be divided into three classes—in the first shall be those scholars who read registers, and other papers, and letters written in hand-writing; in the second, those who are learning to read from printed

books, and are already pretty well advanced; in the third, the little scholars who are learning their letters, and begin to put syllables together and pronounce words¹. ”

At the Ursulines of Franche-Comté, the little girls are divided into six different classes², and “ it is to be remarked that in the sixth [the elementary class] no work is to be taught, for experience has made it evident that, when these little creatures have applied their wits to work before having learned their letters and how to put them together, there is no getting them to attend to their reading lesson. ” The mistresses are to make no sign of impatience or anger in presence of the girls, and are to say “ no sharp or rude words to them, nor despise any of them, let them be ever so poor. ”

We have enumerated for France alone thirty new congregations in one century, and we have not named all. In many dioceses, communities were formed that history never heard of and never mentions. Their names are inscribed only in that eternal book, richer than ours, where are registered those deeds of merit done so secretly, that even the left hand of the doer never finds them out. Not only did these hidden communities exist in many dioceses, but there were, so to speak, none where they did not exist. The learned, in searching the local archives of the period, come upon traces of these fertile works, and the historian suspects their existence before he has proved it. When he sees how the faith has been preserved in the poorest villages in France, how traditions of virtue and Christian knowledge have kept their place at the family hearth, holding out against starvation, revolutions, war, the want of schools for long periods, he says to himself— “ Some diligent hands have been at work here, tilling and watering souls, and scattering the seeds of Christian truth so abundantly, that, from generation to generation, they have gone on reproducing good fruit. ” No portion of the Master’s field was left uncultiv-

¹ *Constitutions*, P. III, Ch. vi, § 2; Allain, *Revue des questions historiques*, t. XXXIII (1883), p. 536. = ² Morey, *l’Enseignement chez les Ursulines de la Franche-Comté*, pp. 36 and 44.

ated; but for this the priest needed helpmates. He found them in those innumerable congregations with which the seventeenth century endowed France, or in those lowly communities, less known, but not less active, that reinforced the army fighting against ignorance.

But if the congregations of women for the instruction of youth were numerous, those of men devoted to the same cause were rare. The few that had been started in France had proved signal failures.

In Holland, during the fourteenth century, Gerard Groot, born in 1340 at Deventer, and who died in odour of sanctity in 1384, sketched out the work of Blessed de la Salle. There was a striking resemblance between the two men. Gerard Groot was also a Canon, first at Utrecht, then at Aix-la-Chapelle; he also gave up his living, and devoted himself to preaching, and founded a community of clerics, called Brothers of the Common Life, who had primary schools, and taught children catechism, reading and writing. These Brothers made their living by copying out books. The Institute was approved by Gregory XI. in 1376¹.

In 1597, an Aragonese, St Joseph Calas Sanctius, came to Rome at the beginning of the pontificate of Clement VIII., and on account of his science was named Doctor in theology. As a member of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Apostles, which distributed alms to the indigent, he came to see the state of wretchedness and ignorance in which the children of the poor were living, and the disastrous effect of this neglect on their morals. He besought the school-masters of the district to receive these poor children into their classes; the masters refused, unless their salary was increased, and this the senate would not consent to. The Saint went in search of a religious order that would have pity on the children;

¹ For a beautiful and faithful account of the Brothers of the Common Life, see *Thomas a Kempis*, by Francis Richard Cruise, London, 1887.

but he failed to find one; each had its own particular aim and mission, and refused to abandon them.

St Joseph Calasancius then undertook the work himself; and in the month of November 1597, he opened the first public free school at Saint Dorothy's in the Trastevere, where the pastor, Antonio Brendani, placed a large hall at his disposal. Two zealous priests joined him, and soon the school had some hundreds of children. They were taught catechism, reading, writing and arithmetic, and were supplied gratis with paper, books, and whatever other things were necessary.

The school was then moved from the Trastevere to Vestri Palace, beside San Andrea della Valle, and here, St Joseph Calasancius began to form an association of priests who devoted themselves with him to the instruction of the poor. He then received the title of "Prefect of the pious schools," and soon these schools reckoned over one thousand scholars.

This Congregation was recognized in 1607 by Paul V., and four years later erected by Gregory XV. into a regular order, with the three ordinary vows and a fourth by which they devoted themselves to teaching. These Religious bore the name of Clerks regular of the Poor of the Mother of God for the pious schools, or more briefly, Scolopii Fathers.

St Joseph Calasancius died in 1648, at the age of ninety-two, and his schools were of great service, and still exist. But they did not spread as much as was hoped, and, above all, they did not continue specially restricted to primary education. They became veritable colleges, whose teaching at the present day extends from reading and writing to the higher branches of education.

In 1592, Venerable Cesar de Bus founded at Cavaillon, in the diocese of Avignon, the congregation of the Christian Doctrine, approved by Clement VIII., and composed of priests and laymen united by a vow of perseverance in the teaching of the catechism. Venerable Cesar de Bus died in 1607, and his disciples, the better to carry out his intentions, opened public free schools which flourished in the south of France until the Revolution. But they also

became eventually transformed into colleges. The chief feature of Venerable de Bus's method was that of teaching Christian doctrine by discussion.

At Lyons, the Christian schools had been very flourishing for a time. M. Demia, a priest of Bourg, named by the Archbishop of Lyons archpriest of Bresse and visitor extraordinary of the diocese of Lyons, had been struck in 1664 by the ignorance and depravity of the youth of Lyons. Feeling the need of applying a remedy to this crying evil, he addressed a complaint to the Provost of the merchants and to the aldermen of the city. The magistrates turned a deaf ear to his pleadings; but some charitable persons were moved, and a school was opened in the district of Saint George. This, however, was not enough, and M. Demia again addressed the magistrates, and this time his eloquent appeal so stirred them, that they sent it round to the various towns of the kingdom. The magistrates, moreover, decided forthwith on voting an annual sum of two hundred francs to found a school where children should be taught Christian doctrine, reading and writing. Others were established soon afterwards. In 1672, there were five where children were received gratis. M. Demia was named by the Archbishop Director general over them all.

He at once drew out minute rules for the schools. The hours of class, the various methods, the punishments, were carefully considered and regulated. In every school, the children were classed according to what they knew. M. Demia had the instinct of mutual education; he appealed to the good will of the best behaved children, and created monitors amongst them who seconded the masters.

Certain methods of teaching were borrowed from Venerable Cesar de Bus. On solemn days, the children held controversies in public on questions from the catechism, on politeness, on the manner of meditating. Those who best maintained the argument received as a reward such clothes as their poverty most needed.

But to direct these schools, masters were wanted. Abbé Demia began by inviting to his house every three months a certain number

of persons, priests and laymen, who had consented to interest themselves in the schools, and he gave them rules and advice. These masters placed themselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and every year, during the Octave of the Nativity, they made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fourvières.

Abbé Demia next extended his solicitude to the secular masters. He obtained a decree, dated May 7th 1674, forbidding any person to keep a primary school without having obtained the permission of the Archbishop, and without having promised to observe the rules. Former masters and mistresses were to present themselves within six months before abbé Demia in order to legalize their position. On the 28th of April 1675, he assembled the masters and mistresses, as the precentor of Notre-Dame was in the habit of doing in Paris, acquainted them with the rules that he had drawn up for them, and thenceforth kept strict watch over them. All the pastors of the diocese had orders to give him an account of the school-masters and mistresses in their respective parishes, and he sent round visitors, from time to time, to inspect them.

Abbé Demia's masters were in request on all sides. The Bishops of Grenoble, of Agde, of Toulon and of Châlons, wrote to him asking for them; and young men were sent to him to be trained. He would have preferred to employ none but priests, and with this object in view, he founded at Lyons, with his own fortune, a seminary where he purposed to train school-masters and vicars for the country parishes. This seminary, called the "Community of Saint Charles," opened in 1672, and approved by the Archbishop in 1679, was recognized by letters patent in May 1680. M. Demia, without residing there, directed it by means of a School-Board composed partly of priests, partly of seculars.

M. Demia died on the 23th of October 1689, in the fifty-third year of his age. But, despite all his efforts, his work did not survive him. The Community of the Sisters of Saint Charles, which he founded for the education of girls and the care of the sick, is still flourishing; but the seminary became a common seminary like any other.

Congregations of priests were not suited for teaching the children of the people : they swerved by degrees from their aim, gave themselves up to secondary education, and took the direction of



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — M. Demia (p. 86 and following). Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Trichon, from a portrait painted by Ruelle.

the colleges. We might speak here appropriately of the Society of Jesus, and of St Ignatius as one of the precursors of Blessed de la Salle; but the Jesuits, above all others, turned their attention to secondary education, and only occupied themselves incidentally with primary schools. And secondary education was the stum-

bling-block to be avoided here, and Blessed de la Salle exerted his utmost zeal not to strike against it. This, next to God's help and his great virtue, was the secret of his success.



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — Blessed Peter Fourier of Mattaincourt (p. 89). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Trichon, from a drawing by Baumgartner.

And yet, the idea of founding lay congregations had occurred to others before Blessed de la Salle.

Blessed Peter Fourier of Mattaincourt, founder of the Congre-

gation of Our Lady for the education of girls, and a man eminently alive to all the wants of his age, had formed a community of men for the education of poor boys of the towns and country parts; but he was not able to get it approved in Rome, and the young men whom he had gathered together, grew tired of the work, and went back into the world.

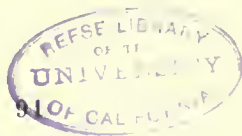
At Orleans, Peter Tranchot, a barrister, founded a primary school in 1652, and with one of his nephews set to teaching little children. But this generous initiative provoked no imitators.

Towards 1660, Francis Perdouls founded schools at Blois, at Tours, and in the country places; but the work did not spread. It was the same thing at Autun, in 1687, where three priests of the town "devoted themselves with all their hearts to the instruction of youth, and principally the children of the poorest among the poor, offering themselves voluntarily and with pleasure to establish a charity school." Their efforts to extend their work over the diocese remained unavailing¹.

In Paris, in 1678, the Reverend Father Barré, founder of the Congregation of the Ladies of Saint Maur, wanted to establish some kind of seminaries for school-masters; but the project did not succeed. The young men that he gathered together thought more of themselves than of their holy vocation; they looked at it in the light of a useful calling, and so lost the grace to remain faithful to it. At the end of a short time, they dispersed, and their schools were closed.

The Bishop of Beauvais, M^r de Buzanval, tried to found a seminary to train school-masters with a view to disseminating them afterwards through the parishes; but he could not command the necessary funds for carrying out the plan. M. de Chennevières, who styled himself "a priest who served the poor," seems not to have been more successful with a petition that he sent up to Louis XIV. concerning the incomparable necessity of founding a seminary "for school-masters and mistresses in every diocese".

¹ Allain, p. 237. = ² National Library, Ms. fr. 2336, quoted by Allain, p. 128.



At Rouen, a pious layman, M. Nyel, charged by the hospital to teach the poor children, established a sort of community whose members, laymen themselves, seconded him in his work; but the little community, which reckoned some twenty members during his life, died out soon after his death.

These unsuccessful attempts were so many abortive schemes of the great work, that Providence meant to accomplish through Blessed de la Salle, and these pious men were his precursors. Like him, they saw the need of organizing Christian education for the poor, and forming masters to take charge of it; like him, they began the work, but they failed to carry it on, either because they lacked the strength for the sacrifices essential to its success, or because they had not received the gifts and the capacity without which it could not be accomplished.

All these undertakings, after beginning brilliantly, perished for want of masters to carry them on. They all laid down precisely the conditions that were necessary for the success and duration of the work; they were so many experiments, that were destined to help Blessed de la Salle one day in drawing up his own rules. The majority of their founders, though they failed to accomplish their purpose, had a direct or indirect influence on M. de la Salle, and became unconsciously his fellow-workers.

The remonstrances of M. Demia, that were forwarded to Rheims, were communicated to Canon Roland and M. de la Salle, and may have contributed to incline the charity of the latter towards the good work of teaching.

In 1708, he inquired carefully into the Institute of the Fathers of the Pious Schools in Rome; he sought to make himself acquainted with their rules, their conduct and their government¹. Father Barré, while he lived, was his guide and counsellor. M. Nyel was his first partner, and the one who put this work of the schools into his hands.

Every thing, therefore, at the end of the seventeenth century,

¹ Letter xviii. Letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin, then in Rome.

converges towards the foundation of an Institute destined to direct Christian schools, every thing is ready, and awaiting the Founder.

M. Bourdoise, one of the most ardent propagators of ecclesiastical reform, and the friend of St Vincent de Paul, had been struck by this necessity. " I wish, " he wrote to M. Olier, " we could have a school filled with the supernatural spirit, and where children might learn to read and write, and also be trained into good parishioners. For to see money spent on teaching them merely to read and write, without making them better, or more Christianlike, is really a pity; and yet this is what generally is the case. Nowadays all classes of children go to school, but to schools where nature is every thing. We must not, consequently, be surprised if, afterwards, they don't lead Christian lives; because, in order to have a school useful to Christianity, one must have masters who will labour there like perfect Christians, and not like hirelings, regarding the office as a miserable trade, taken up to get their bread. For my part, I declare from my heart, *I would willingly beg from door to door to procure the means of living for a real school-master*, and, like St Francis Xavier, I would implore all the Universities for men, not to go off to Japan and the Indies to convert the infidel, but to begin this excellent work. It is easy enough to find amongst the clergy men ready to take a vicarage or a parish; but to find any one with piety and the other qualities necessary to keep a school, and who, having also the means of living, is yet willing to work under the authority of the pastor, this is very rare indeed. Whence I conclude that to devote one's self to forming such masters, is a work more useful to the Church and more meritorious than to preach all one's life in the pulpits of the largest towns of the kingdom. *I believe that a priest who had the science of the Saints would be a school-master, and would be canonized for it.* The best masters, the greatest, the most esteemed, the Doctors of the Sorbonne, would not be too good for the office. Because the parish schools are poor, and taught by poor men,

people imagine they are nothing. And yet it is the only means of destroying vice and instilling virtue, and I defy all men united to find a better one. I believe that if St Paul and St Denis were to come back to France now, they would undertake the work of school-masters in preference to any other."

"For fifty-seven years," adds M. Bourdoise, "I have been familiar with the work of a field laborer; and during all that time I have seen no work more futile than that of sowing in ground that has not been previously well manured and ploughed. Now, it is by means of Christian schools that hearts are prepared to receive the word of God from preachers." And elsewhere he says: "The school is the novitiate of Christianity. It is the Seminary of seminaries." These are golden words.

At last, more and more possessed by this idea, he undertook to found an Association of prayers to obtain from God the blessing of Christian school-masters for France. He was then at Liancourt; and there happened to be there at the same time a great many ecclesiastics and Religious whom civil war had driven away from Paris. Seventy of the number, amongst whom were several members of the Community of Saint Sulpice, entered into the Association, which was placed under the protection of St Joseph. All the Associates pledged themselves to celebrate the feast of the Saint with great devotion, to pray incessantly that God might inspire ecclesiastical superiors with zeal for Christian schools, and to do their utmost personally in the cause. M. Bourdoise himself set the example. He wrote, he preached, he lectured with his accustomed ardour. One day, in the church of Gentilly, near Paris, he spoke with such burning eloquence on the subject, that, after the sermon, eighty persons had themselves inscribed as members of the Association. This Association began on the 15th of March 1649; two years later, on the 30th of April 1651, John Baptist de la Salle was born. God had sent into the world the future Founder of the Brotherhood of Christian Schools.

What was at that period the situation of the Church and of Europe? In Rome, Pope Innocent X. was governing the Church with a firm hand. In France, the troubles of the Fronde were not over, and Louis XIV. was beginning amidst the horrors of civil war that long reign which was destined to be such a glorious one. In Germany, the treaty of Westphalia had broken the ancient constitution of the German Empire, and consecrated the political independence of the Protestant States. France had gained some territory by it; but these brilliant conquests were only too dearly purchased, for they were preparing the advent of the power that is oppressing France to-day. In England, Cromwell was inaugurating the series of bloody and Regicidal republics, and Charles II., son of the murdered King, was flying to France, for the shelter and hospitality which England was one day to pay back to the brother of Louis XVI.

In a word, the old Christian constitution of Europe had fallen under the blows of Protestantism, and the world was entering upon a new era in which the state, political and social, was to rest altogether on the principle of private judgement and the separation of the two powers, the temporal and the spiritual. The Papacy alone saw through the vices of this new organization and the disasters that must result to Europe from it. The Pope had condemned the terms of the treaty of Westphalia which were contrary to canon law; but his voice was lost in the confusion caused by these upheavings and these wars.

The Church, meantime, was not disheartened. She strove vigorously against Protestantism, by her works and by her doctrine, and, after condemning a Reformation that was bent upon destroying her, she reformed with a strong hand all the abuses that had crept into her own breast. The decrees of the Council of Trent were being executed everywhere, even in France, and began to produce fruit. Saints had come to enforce them. In France, St Vincent of Paul was working with an energy unimpaired by the weight of years : he had reformed the morals of the clergy, secular and regular, organized ecclesiastical instruction, instituted

the Sisters of Charity, the Lazarist Fathers, and formed by his direction and his example a multitude of priests who were destined to uphold the faith through the trying years that were at hand. M. Olier, founder of the Seminary and the Society of Saint Sulpice; M. Bourdoise, founder of the Seminary of Saint Nicholas-du-Chardonnet; the Reverend Father Barré, founder of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, and many others, seconded his efforts in this weighty task.

Christian life had, therefore, lost nothing of its old fertility; but the Church was occupied above all about education. While Protestantism was laying down the principle of private judgement and pretending to emancipate reason, she kept shedding light on souls by incessant preaching. After creating the universities, which, becoming jealous of her rights, grew to forget their origin, she sent forth the Jesuits, a militant and teaching order, which, though scarcely a hundred years old, had already covered the face of Europe with colleges destined to the education of the wealthy and the middle classes. She had founded seminaries for the education of the clergy. Bourdaloue, Bossuet and Massillon were teaching the King and his courtiers from the pulpit of Versailles. Bossuet was breaking lances with the chiefs of Protestantism, and teaching them the Scriptures, which they were disfiguring, and history, which they were striving to forget, and with all this he still found time, like Fenelon, to devote to the education of princes. The Benedictines of the Congregation of Saint Maur by their learned publications were laying the foundations of historical science and criticism. The Oratory was disputing the palm of sacred learning with them. The Seminary of Foreign Missions was founded for the Christianizing of pagans and barbarians. Innumerable Congregations were being formed for the education of girls. M. de Rancé was about to revive the austerities of the monastic rule amongst the descendants of the ancient orders fallen into relaxation; and at the summit of the Church, the Pope, keeping watch over the purity of doctrine and the integrity of human reason, was, in condemning the propositions of Jansenius, defending liberty.

The reign of Truth is never peaceful. Heresy in a thousand forms is perpetually attacking her and trying to usurp her place. Just now, under the name of Jansenism, it was troubling the



The predecessors of Blessed de la Salle. — Abbé Bourdoise (p. 92). — Drawn by Edouard Garnier, from a print of the period; engraved by Trichon.

Church, and was to go on disturbing her for a whole century. At the same time, Gallicanism, of older date and equally dangerous influence, continued its ravages, ensnaring Louis XIV. through his pride, and fascinating even the genius of Bossuet. The very years in

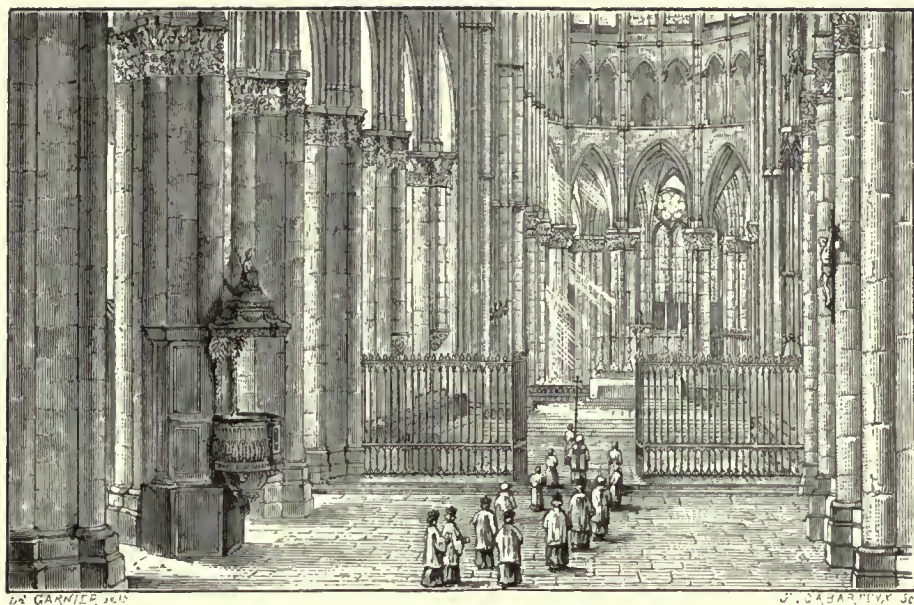
which M. de la Salle was born, Dupuy published the new edition of his *Preuves des libertés de l'Église gallicane*.

Such was the period in the midst of which Blessed de la Salle was born into the world. He also was to be the creator of a system of teaching. He was to receive doctrine in trust; he was to preserve it intact, to assimilate it by prayer and meditation, and then to distribute it around, and find innumerable disciples who would go on distributing it after him. In this universal education, dispensed with such prodigality, there was, nevertheless, one class, the humblest and most numerous, that was neglected and left without masters. These were the little boys of the lower middle classes. It was to them that Blessed de la Salle was sent.



BOOK THE SECOND

LIFE OF BLESSED DE LA SALLE



Rheims. — Interior of the Cathedral of which Blessed de la Salle was Canon. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, engraved by Cabarteux.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION.



TRAVELLER, visiting Rheims, and seeking for some remnant of the ancient town amidst the new buildings of the modern one, will sometimes be tempted to loiter in the narrow Rue de l'Arbalète, before a large house whose battered remains still testify to bygone splendor. Above the ground floor there runs a wide frieze decorated with military trophies, amongst which is a broken escutcheon. Between two windows of the first floor is a deep niche, crowned with a stone canopy, and from which the statue has disappeared. To the right is a slender tower of three stories, inside of which is a winding

staircase, while the outside is flanked with a stone buttress. On either side of the entrance door, are two stone statues, life size; one represents a man with a beard, and the other a woman wearing a broad belt crosswise. They will tell you in the town these two personages are Adam and Eve, placed there by the builder of the house in memory of Adam the flax-seller, a famous flax merchant of the fourteenth century. At that period, the Rue de l'Arbalète, which then bore the name of the Hempdresser¹, was in the centre of the linen trade of Rheims, which rivalled that of Flanders.

In 1651, the mansion in question was not inhabited by a merchant. It belonged to M^{me} Barbara Coquebert, widow of Lancelot de la Salle, who resided there with her second son, Louis de la Salle, King's Councillor at the presidial court of Rheims. It is, therefore, in this house that, most probably, the founder of the Brotherhood of the Christian Schools was born. His father lived there to 1664, and it is certain that his first years were passed there.

The family of la Salle, originally from Bearn, was of ancient nobility— one of its ancestors, being, it is said, grievously wounded in the ninth century when fighting for Alphonsus the Chaste. This story is open to discussion; but there is no doubt that the de la Salles sprang from a vigorous, Christian race.

This noble family was divided into several branches. The Champagne branch had carried on the profession of arms with great renown. In the fifteenth century, one of the ancestors of Blessed de la Salle, Menault de la Salle, was man-at-arms and Knight of King Charles VIII. He fought in Brittany under the Chevalier Bayart, and he took part in the expedition to Naples. His grandson, Lancelot de la Salle, came to settle at Rheims, and had two children who divided the family into two new branches.

The elder branch entered the magistracy, the younger went into trade. John Baptist de la Salle comes from the elder branch. Louis, his father, purchased the commission of royal Councillor of

¹ Rue de la Chanvrerie.

the presidial court of Rheims. In 1650, he allied himself to another family of magistrates; he married Nicole Moët, daughter of John Moët, equerry, seigneur of Brouillet, councillor at the same court, and of Perrette Lespaignol, his wife.

The 30th of April 1651, his first child was born, and baptized the same day in the church of Saint-Hilary, which no longer exists. The boy had, for God-father and God-mother, his maternal grandfather and grandmother, and received from them the name of John Baptist. This was the future founder of the Christian Schools.

In the midst of this troubled age, where every man feels in the depth of his soul the reverberations of the agitation around him, we can hardly realize the tranquillity that reigned in the bosom of Christian families of the last centuries. Society, solidly established on its own basis, allowed individual lives to flow peacefully on, in an even tenor, uniform and pre-arranged. The eldest son followed his father's career, and contrived with the fortune inherited from him to maintain the honor of the name, and to take care of any of his brothers who failed to make an independence for themselves. The other children might follow their inclination, some taking up the profession of arms, some entering the Church. Religious vocations were more frequent, not that they were imposed by the families, but because in those elevated Christian souls, untouched by doubt, the spirit of God breathed more easily and efficaciously.

The livelihood of all the children being thus assured, nothing troubled the peace of the domestic hearth. Families were numerous and united. The gloomy anxiety which weighs upon so many parents in these days was then unknown. There was then hardly any example of these sudden fortunes which kindle the flame of covetousness in the calmest breasts, nor of those instantaneous crashes which make the most solid positions seem insecure. Such violent disturbances might happen in Paris, at Versailles, amongst those launched in the vortex of court extravagances; but only in that world of perpetual excitement and extremes. The provinces

knew hardly anything about them— and the provinces then were all France.

We do not want to paint in too seductive colours those remote ages, nor let it be supposed they were free from trouble. Fortunes

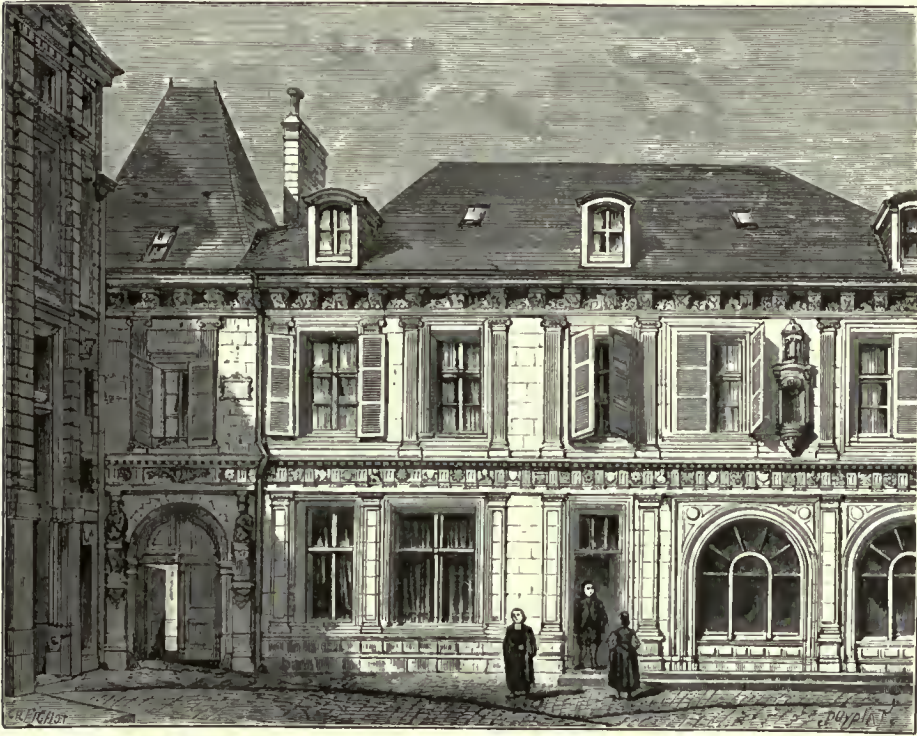


House where Blessed de la Salle was born, at Rheims (p. 101). — Restitution by M. Ch. Fichot; engraved by H. Joffroy.

were less divided than in our day. The upper classes were rich; the middle classes lived by their industry and grew wealthy; but the lower classes were poor and eked out a scanty living by following hard and trying trades. They found it difficult to rise above their condition, and from time to time famine swept over them and decimated them.

Hardship, did not, however, apparently, make more victims than

it does now, and, above all, it had not the horrible features that distinguish it in our age. It was poverty, not pauperism. It was frugal life, hard work, but bravely borne by serene souls and healthy bodies; it was not that mixture of vice and of revolt that agitates the lower classes and exhausts them more than any amount of privations could do. The peasant and the workman did not mur-



House where Blessed de la Salle was born, at Rheims (p. 101). — Restitution by M. Ch. Fichot ;
engraved by Puyplat.

mur then against the conditions in which Providence had placed them. They knew of no others, and it did not occur to them that there could be any other for them. The sphere of their ambition was limited, and no unreasonable longings troubled their placid labour. Moreover, the sunshine of faith threw its mild and tender glow over these industrious toilers, and beyond this life they foresaw another, where the inequalities of this one were to be made right.

Nothing is more consoling, more refreshing, than the account

of Blessed de la Salle's childhood. We see him living in the bosom of his family, amidst the serious and austere habits of the magistracy in the seventeenth century. No boisterous pleasures disquiet his soul; no unseemly word tarnishes the purity of his mind, nor disturbs his faith. His days flow on smoothly, divided between prayer and study.

This calm exterior life deepened the natural gravity of his disposition. Of an open and loveable nature, young de la Salle gave early signs of rare piety. He did not care for the amusements of his age. His great pleasure was to make little oratories and altars, and imitate the ceremonies of the Church, and his greatest happiness was to be taken to church, where he assisted at the services with extraordinary recollection. Worldly gatherings had no charm for him. One day, all the family were assembled for a great feast. Their noisy merriment saddened young de la Salle; he drew his grand-mother aside and got her to read the lives of the Saints for him. According to one of his biographers, the predestined child loved passionately that beautiful, that incomparable book, and his mother was in the habit of reading it to him constantly. His father wished him to learn music, but the child had so little taste for the art, that the father did not insist upon it. He cared for nothing but the singing in church. He learned how to serve mass, obtained leave to be an altar-boy, and performed the duties of the office with such piety that all who saw him were edified. It is clear that already God was speaking to him, and that an interior voice was beginning to close his ear to all vain conversations. But his piety, far from being stiff or morose, was simple and sweet, and in no way took from the charm of his conversation, or the serenity of his countenance. It merely rendered him more conscientious in his studies, more docile to his parents, more affable to everybody.

It was not without a purpose that we recalled the ancient lineage of the de la Salle family, although the saintly founder of Christian schools renounced for himself all honors and nobility. The virtues and qualities of parents leave their imprint on the

souls of their children. Like unto his ancestors, Blessed de la Salle was valiant, and his life was a perpetual warfare. If he was not a soldier in the King's service, he was a knight in the service of God. He fought against unseen enemies, more formidable than enemies of flesh and blood, and he displayed as much heroism in exterminating evil and vices, as the head of his family ever showed in combatting the Saracens. Like his father, he had the sense of justice in a high degree, but he made use of it only to walk strictly within the lines of duty. He had a good right to bear the family arms¹.

Young de la Salle was therefore born to those possessions which most men seek and strive for all through their lives : birth, honors and fortune. Happily for him, along with these advantages, Providence reserved him others that were less perishable. He was born of a Christian family.

His maternal grandfather, following a custom which was very general amongst laymen at that period, recited his Breviary every day. His father fulfilled all his duties as a Christian, and the tender piety of his mother diffused its fragrance through her home. No wonder, then, that out of the seven children that God gave them, four consecrated themselves to His service in the Religious life and in the Priesthood. It was a noble reward, and a foretaste of heaven.

John Baptist had a brother, Joseph de la Salle, who in his early youth entered the community of the Canons regular of Saint Genevieve at Senlis. Having taken his degrees, he taught philosophy and theology at Blois; he was then named pastor of Saint Martin's of Blois, where he remained eighteen years, and afterwards became pastor of Saint Martin's of Chauny, in Picardy. He died four years after Blessed de la Salle.

A second brother, John Louis de la Salle, was, after John Baptist, Canon of the church of Rheims and seneschal. Notwith-

¹ The family arms consist of a brace of shields, in one of which is an azure field with three chevrons in gold, placed two and one; in the other, the field is argent with a pointed heart of gules.

standing certain doctrinal difficulties that he had occasionally with his brother—John Baptist remained always submissive to the Holy See, whereas Louis figured amongst the appellants—the latter was devoted to the work of the schools, and his name figures



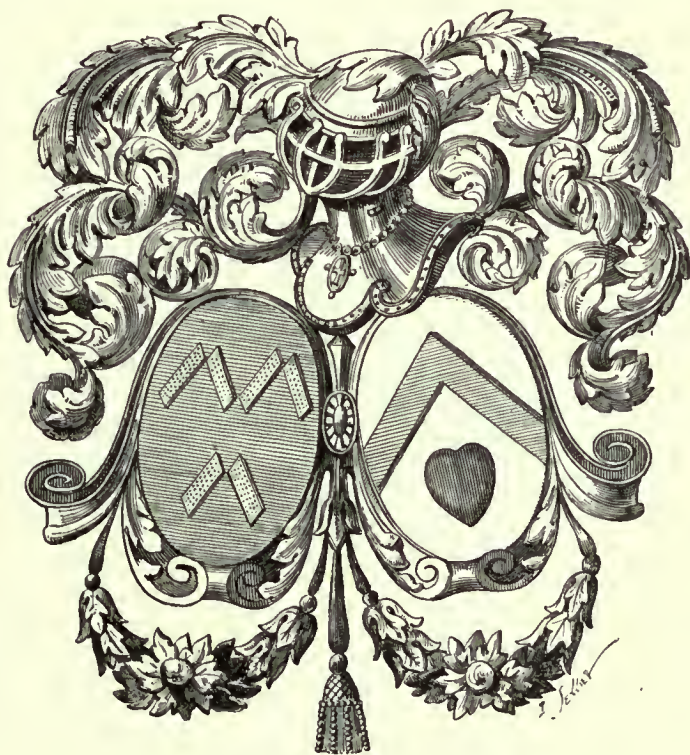
Rheims. — House in the Rue des Anglais, formerly Rue de la Tournelle, where Blessed de la Salle first went, on June 21st 1680, to live in common with "the masters". He soon left it to reside in Rue Neuve.
— Drawn by Fichot Junior.

in the deeds beside that of his brother, for securing to the schools of Rheims the right over property which had been given them.

One of the sisters of Blessed de la Salle entered the Abbey of Saint-Étienne-des-Dames, of the Order of Canonesses of Saint Augustin, at Rheims.

The other children, two sons and a daughter, were married; but

they upheld in the world those grand and noble traditions which had from time immemorial been the honor of the family. One of them, Peter de la Salle, succeeded to his father's office, and was like him counsellor of the presidial court of Rheims. His name should be inscribed amongst the benefactors of the schools, since he was universal legatee to all his brothers, and secured the



Arms of Blessed de la Salle (p. 107). — Drawn by Sellier.

transfer of such property as was deeded over to the schools of the Institute.

Towards eight or nine years of age, young de la Salle was sent to the University of Rheims, founded in 1554, and directed at this period by the rector Thomas Mercier. He soon made great progress, for he had quick intelligence, great love of work, and that ever present fear of God which made him attentive to all his duties. He gained at once the esteem of his masters, who were delighted with his docility, and the affection of his companions,

who liked his amiable disposition, so that, after having been the model of children at home, he became the model of scholars in his class.

His piety, meantime, increased from day to day. His grandfather had taught him how to recite the office, and he practised this devotion with a pleasure altogether rare for a child of his age. He had acquired the habit of it long before he received the tonsure, and he never afterwards failed in it.

This fidelity in the service of God and taste for devotional practices were so many signs of a vocation. His family noticed this, and threw no obstacle in his way. Although his parents would probably have preferred that the eldest son should inherit the family name and fortune, they were careful not to stand between the spirit of God and their child, and there is no evidence of his having had the smallest opposition in obeying the Divine voice. Christian families are roots destined to produce Saints. These latter are the flower and fruit of that evangelical sap, which, after flowing down through generations, every now and then, blossoms out in certain privileged souls, that shed honor on the race they spring from.

The family of Blessed de la Salle were prouder of his vocation than if he had inherited the paternal office, and the Priesthood, though it debarred him from perpetuating his race, endowed him with a spiritual paternity that was one day to give him innumerable sons.

At eleven years of age, young de la Salle received the tonsure from the hands of the Bishop of Aulone, M^{gr} Maleveau, in the archiepiscopal chapel of Rheims, March 11th 1662.

The then Chancellor of the University of Rheims was Peter Dozet, former Vicar General, Archdeacon of Champagne, and Canon of the cathedral for over fifty-three years. He was a man of great piety and wide learning.

He had noticed the happy dispositions of John Baptist, who was his relation. Old, worn out, feeling death at hand, he determined to leave his canonry to the young levite, convinced that the

Church of Rheims would have reason to thank him for the choice. He gave in his resignation, which was accepted, and young de la Salle was named in his place to the twenty-first prebend, in 1666. He took possession of his canonry on the 17th of January 1667. He had not yet attained his sixteenth year. Peter Dozet died the following year.

The chapter of Rheims was one of the most illustrious of



Costume of the Canons of Rheims. — Drawn by Fichot, from an enlarged seal of the Seneschal of the Chapter of Rheims, and following.

France. It numbered fifty-six canons, sixty-one chaplains, four priests and four sacristans. It had at its head eight dignitaries : the dean, a great archdeacon, the archdeacon of Champagne, a provost, a precentor, a treasurer, a deputy of the Bishop in matters temporal¹, and a professor of divinity. In 1789, thirty-three of its members had been Bishops, twenty had occupied the archiepiscopal see of Rheims, twenty-one had worn the Roman purple,

¹ He was known as the *Vidame*.

four had sat upon the throne of St Peter, under the names of Sylvester II., Urban II., Adrian IV. and Adrian V., and they heaped

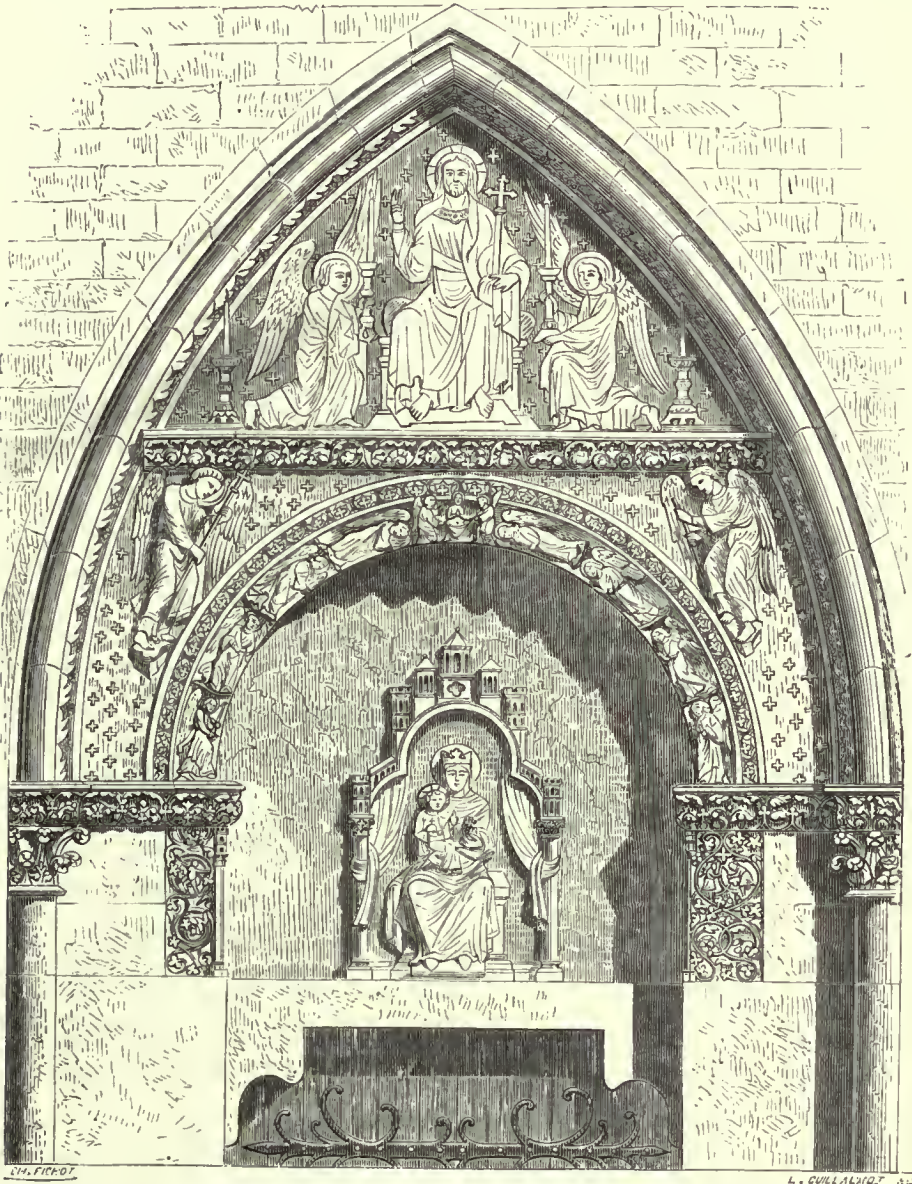


Cathedral of Rheims, where Blessed de la Salle was Canon. — Drawn by Toussaint.

privileges on the venerable body to which they had for a time belonged.

The Canons of Rheims wore a rich costume— in summer, a

violet camail and the aumuce¹; in winter, the large camail bordered with ermine. The Chapter took rank immediately after the



Porta pretiosa, at Rheims. — Drawn by Ch. Fichot; engraved by L. Guillaumot.

Archbishop. Peter Dozet must have had great confidence in the solid piety and virtue of a boy of fifteen to create him a member of this illustrious body. But he had known the boy well and long.

¹ A fur worn on the arm by certain Canons.

He was not, however, sparing of advice to him on this account. "My little cousin," he would say, "bear in mind that a Canon should be like a Cistercian Monk, passing his life in solitude and prayer." And his little cousin never forgot this admonition. The premature dignity with which he was invested was not without dangers of its own. There was the possibility of its smothering in the soft ease of an assured position the budding of the youth, and proving fatal to the higher vocation which was calling him to more arduous work. But the young Canon, on the contrary, only regarded his office as a heavier duty imposed upon him. He was regular in choir, punctual at prayers, and assiduous at work.

He began at once to prepare himself to receive the four minor Orders. Cardinal Barberini was then titular Archbishop of Rheims; but he had not yet been able to obtain his bulls, and the see was vacant. Young de la Salle received minor Orders on March 17th 1668, at the hands of M^r Charles de Bourbon, Bishop of Soissons.

Every new title that Blessed de la Salle received was regarded by him in the light of a new obligation, and a higher duty. According as he committed himself more fully and irrevocably to the service of God, he felt the need of rendering himself more worthy. As a Canon, it was necessary for him to be learned in divine sciences, and fit to take his place amongst the eminent men who surrounded him. So the moment he returned to Rheims, he began to attend the classes of the University. He finished his studies in the humanities, and went through the two years course of philosophy necessary for obtaining the degree of Master of Arts, which he took very brilliantly in 1669.

He was already too deeply versed in the secrets of Christian life not to understand that science has its dangers, and that to possess it without peril, we must not separate it from the love of God. In the midst of his studies, young de la Salle relaxed nothing of the assiduous piety which had formed the delight of his childhood, and began henceforth to give himself up to that practice of penance which was to be the sustenance of his life. As he did

everything in secret, his humility carefully concealing from all eyes whatever might have raised him in the esteem of men, his austerities are hard to trace. It is only known that at this date he slept on a bed that was more than monastic in its hardness, consisting as it did of logs of wood, in order to conquer the flesh, and not to lose in sleep hours that might be spent more profitably in communion with God.

His biographers say no more; but this one instance will suffice to show what the moral standard of his life was. We must be satisfied if we can lift one corner of the veil which covers the merits of the Saints. They love the hidden virtues above all others, those that are practised under the eye of God alone, and that men can only guess at, but never see.

The degree of Master of Arts which young de la Salle had taken was only the preliminary to the doctorship. His father wished him to pursue his studies in Paris, and looked out for a house where he would be safe from the perils which were sure to assail him in a city which was, even at that period, a hotbed of corruption and a centre of pleasure.

There was then in Paris, as now, an institution whose principal aim was to train good priests and prepare them for the apostolate by developing in their souls the interior life of Jesus Christ and His holy Mother.

This was the Institution of Saint-Sulpice, founded towards 1649 by M. Olier, and solemnly approved in 1651, the year that Blessed de la Salle was born. When young de la Salle entered the seminary, in 1670, M. Olier had been dead thirteen years; but his spirit lived there still, and the example of his virtues, still fresh in the memory of all, was guiding his successors in the way in which he had walked so admirably. M. de Bretonvilliers, who succeeded M. Olier himself, was then superior of the seminary, and M. Tronson was director.

The latter had a firm soul and an upright mind.

Trained by M. Olier, associated in his labors, the depositary of his traditions, he had become an enlightened guide in the direc-

tion of young priests. The books he has left us on this subject are full of his own long experience, and that peculiar wisdom which comes only to those who are in the habit of dealing with the things of God. It was under him that Abbé de la Salle was at once placed. He had, however, as special director a man who, amidst that goodly company of great Christians, was distinguished by profound humility and that simple piety, free from all display, which is one of the characteristics of the Society of Saint-Sulpice.

This was M. Baüyn. One incident, the memory of which has been preserved in the traditions of the seminary, will give some idea of his great perfection. Bossuet was one day paying a visit to M. Tronson, and the conversation fell on the Saints. The Bishop of Meaux complained that the age, grown sterile, no longer produced any. M. Tronson denied this, and declared that the Church was always fruitful, and that souls of the highest virtue were still to be found. He mentioned M. Baüyn, and extolled his deep humility. Just at this moment, some one knocked at the door. It was M. Baüyn come to consult his superior. The latter, who knew who it was, did not answer, and M. Baüyn contented himself with waiting in the next room.

When Bossuet was going away, he was still there; M. Tronson saw him, and, to give his visitor the proof of what he had been just saying, he turned on M. Baüyn, accused him of having listened at the door; he sharply upbraided him for such unseemly behaviour, and dismissed him. M. Baüyn offered neither denial nor excuse, but meekly accepted these unmerited reproaches, so wounding to self-love. He bowed his head humbly, and withdrew, leaving his superior full of joy at his fidelity under the trial, and Bossuet confounded.

We relate this incident in order to exemplify the kind of direction that Abbé de la Salle received from M. Baüyn. The disciple was to follow in the footsteps of the master; we shall see him, also, silent under unmerited accusations.

M. Baüyn appreciated at a glance his hidden virtues; he felt himself drawn into sympathy with a soul that was in so many





ways kindred to his own, and set himself earnestly to develop the treasures it contained. There sprang up at once between the two men a friendship which neither time nor events ever weakened.

When, later, M. de la Salle returned to Paris, he took M. Baüyn for his director; he consulted him in his difficulties and trials, and it is said that M. Baüyn, then broken down with age, used to come and visit him. If Blessed de la Salle did not come at once, M. Baüyn would kneel down in the garden, or wherever he happened to be, and pray while waiting for him.

Amongst the other ecclesiastics charged with the management of the seminary were M. Leschassier, who became director after M. Tronson; M. Baudrand, afterwards parish-priest of Saint-Sulpice, and who called Blessed de la Salle into his parish because of the impression he retained of him; M. Charles Picoté, one of the first companions of M. Olier, and who kept up his traditions in the seminary, where he lived to the 1st of December 1679.

M. de la Salle made his entrance there on the 18th of October 1670, and his name may be read to-day on the register of admission of that period in the following terms— “ John Baptist de la Salle, acolyte and Canon of Rheims. ”

Several young ecclesiastics who attained afterwards to high dignities in the Church were his fellow-seminarists. Amongst these were Jean Claude de Vertrieu, of Montdidier, who was Canon of Saint Jean of Lyons in 1680, and Bishop of Poitiers in 1702; Paul Godet des Marais, who became Bishop of Chartres, and always entertained a deep friendship for Blessed de la Salle; M. des Hayes, afterwards pastor of Saint Saviour's at Rouen, and who, by his influence, brought the Christian Brothers to Darnetal in 1702; M. Meretz, who became Canon of Nîmes, and established the Brothers at Alais; M. Canel, afterwards councillor-clerk at the Parliament of Grenoble; M. de Saléon, first Canon of Saint-André of Grenoble, and who was promoted successively to the Bishoprics of Agen and of Rodez, and finally to the Archbishopric of Vienne.

Blessed de la Salle, in his humility, refrained doubtless from

making any use of these numerous influential acquaintances ; at any rate, there is no trace of his having ever done so throughout his history. They must, nevertheless, have contributed to draw the attention of many important ecclesiastics to his work from the first, and if, throughout the endless opposition which was woven into his very life, he found warm and solid friendships that stood by him during the ordeal and protected him against his detractors, we may seek the origin of them at Saint-Sulpice where he gave such an example of every virtue.

Abbé de la Salle spent a year and a half at the seminary. It is characteristic of ecclesiastical houses wisely governed, that good is done there without noise or display. In those mysterious retreats, far from the vain agitations of the world, the future soldiers of the Cross are trained in prayer and study. Those only who direct them know what light and strength they need in the battle of life, and in what triple armour their hearts must be encased before they can face the attacks which the world has in reserve for them. These weapons, they receive from their priestly education. Alone with themselves, under the guidance of experienced ecclesiastics who teach them how to sound the depths of their hearts, they come to know the world whose image they reflect within themselves. Their inward eye, made clear by prayer, acquires a singular power of seeing through the most complicated questions. In the habit of conquering themselves, they secure their future triumph over their external enemies, which are easily disarmed when they have not one's passions for accomplices. Divine truth, pondered on in their hearts, penetrates them wholly, and fuses heart and mind within them in a wonderful manner; the purity of the heart guarding the lucidity of the mind, the one giving its warmth in exchange for the light of the other, and both coöperating in vital works. Thus are formed those legions of priests whose virtues, hidden under the modest simplicity of their lives, are scarcely discernible to the outer world, but who, in reality, bear on their shoulders almost the whole burden of Christian civilization. They it is who receive the deposit of Divine truth, who preserve

it pure from all alloy, who defend it against every assault, who keep it alive, and propagate it amongst souls; they it is who feed the fire of charity which produces good works, and almost all the good that is done passes through their hands. They restrain the impetuous, awaken the somnolent, bring back the wandering, uphold the weak, and continue that Divine apostleship which has been carried on for eighteen centuries.

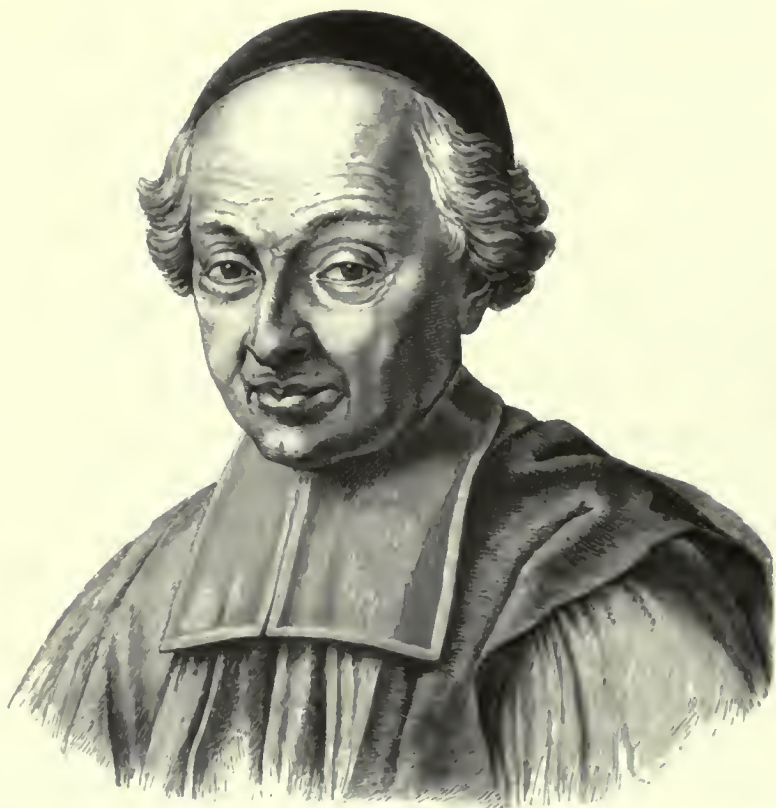
The seminary of Saint Sulpice must have been an incomparable school for Blessed de la Salle, who was destined to become the shepherd of such a numerous flock. We know very little of his life there. The work of his education was silently done. This is the way of all seminarian life; humility drops her veil around it, and virtues, like flowers, put forth their buds noiselessly. The testimony of one of the professors in this blessed house shows us the impression that de la Salle made there during his short sojourn. "He was from the first," says M. Leschassier, "a faithful observer of the rule, and punctual at all the exercises of the community. His conversation was always gentle and decorous. He never seemed to me to have annoyed any one, or merited any reproach."

From a man so sparing of praise, such a judgment is full of eloquence. But what better than any masters testifies to the excellent education of Blessed de la Salle are his virtues. He showed throughout his life a firm and tender piety wherein we recognize all the characteristics of the direction of Saint Sulpice. He manifested on every occasion respect for Divine things, observed strictly all the rules of propriety, and gave himself up to his attraction for prayer. God was his refuge. In all his difficulties he had recourse to Him; He was the star that ever guided him through the storm and preserved him from shipwreck.

The life of the seminary, so conformable to his tastes, was not to last long for Blessed de la Salle. Less than a year after his entrance to Saint Sulpice, on the 20th of July 1671, he lost his mother, and this death was a deep grief to him. A few months later, his father was carried off. They both died at a comparatively early age, leaving him a large fortune to manage, and a

numerous family to bring up; six children to whom he was henceforth to be both father and mother.

His father died on the 9th of April 1672; on the 19th of the same month, Blessed de la Salle left the seminary, and returned to the paternal mansion in Rheims, to take the direction of the family of which he was now the head.



M. Leschassier (pp. 117, 119, and following). — Engraved by M'aulle, from a portrait of F. Andre, a Dominican; engraved on copperplate by J. Moyreau.

He experienced at this crisis, not a temptation against his vocation—it had taken too deep root in his soul to be shaken—but a certain hesitation before binding himself in Holy Orders. He did not wish in so momentous a concern, to follow his own lights; the way of obedience seemed the safest to him. With this feeling, he placed himself under the direction of a priest of great virtue and experience, Canon Roland.

Canon Nicolas Roland was born at Rheims, on the 2nd of

December 1642. He belonged to a good and wealthy family. His father had been Commissary of war, and his mother, Nicole Beuvelet, was the sister of M. Beuvelet, priest at Saint-Nicolas-du-



M. Roland (p. 120, and following), from a portrait of the period. — Drawn by Vidal; engraved by Méaulle.

Chardonnet, who left behind him a great reputation for sanctity. Young Nicolas was educated at the Jesuits; he was afterwards received as Doctor at the Sorbonne, and returned to Rheims, where he was named Canon and theologian of the Cathedral.

He was a pious man, enlightened, detached from the world, seeking and commending poverty, humiliation and penance. He wore a hair-shirt and an iron belt, lodged in a wretched place, and deprived himself of everything approaching to luxury or comfort. He took in a certain number of young ecclesiastics whom he prepared for the priestly life, and whose studies and conscience he directed, so that his house was a kind of little seminary. Blessed de la Salle was not apparently one of his boarders, but he was amongst the most docile of his penitents and the most faithful of his disciples, and his life has many traits of resemblance in common with that of M. Roland.

The latter very soon discovered to what a perfect way the soul confided to him was called. He advised him to respond quickly to grace. This counsel, given with authority, put an end to the perplexities of young de la Salle.

Two months after his return to Rheims, he set out for Laon, in order to receive the first of the major Orders; but there was no ordination there, nor at Noyon, whither he hastened, so he was obliged to go to Cambrai, where he was ordained sub-deacon, on the eve of Trinity Sunday, in the year 1672. He was just twenty-one.

Blessed de la Salle never took a step backward in the way of perfection. When he had acquired the habit of a virtue, or adopted a salutary practice, he never gave it up, and no external circumstances could change him. At the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, he felt the value of a rule of conduct. He carried this principle into his own house, where he and his brothers observed a monastic regularity of life. Rising and going to bed, work and prayer, recreations and meals were always at the same hour, and lasted a given length of time. The only fruitful lives are those that are thus regulated. They are a faithful imitation of nature, who is always methodical and rhythmic in her march. They are also the only free lives.

Thus did Blessed de la Salle pass six years of his life without in any way coming before the world. These years were, in real-

ity, a continuation of his hidden life; the hour for manifesting himself before men had not yet come. It was not, on this account, a barren life that he was leading. He resumed his studies, which had been interrupted by the death of his parents. He would gladly have gone to Paris to finish them, but this desire was sacrificed to the primary duty of watching over the education of his brothers and sisters. He remained, therefore, at Rheims, and followed assiduously the classes of the Faculty of Theology; he took his degree of *Licenciate*, giving to prayer and good works all the time that remained to him after his studies.

M. Roland, seeing the growing ardour of the young priest, feared that his office of Canon did not offer a wide enough field for his zeal.

He advised him, therefore, to enter the active ministry, and to exchange his canonry for a parish in the town. The parish-priest of Saint Pierre of Rheims was anxious to procure such an exchange for himself, and Blessed de la Salle, the moment he saw that it offered him a chance of being more useful, at once accepted it. But the consent of the Archbishop, M^r Letellier, was necessary; and as he was just then in Paris, Blessed de la Salle set out for that city, to get himself ordained Deacon, and to submit his desire to the Prelate¹ at the same time. The latter flatly refused to accede to it. He considered Blessed de la Salle too young to administer a parish: and he thought that it was too soon for him to abandon the direction of his family; consequently, he ordered both the pastor and the Canon to stay where they were. For the pastor, it was a sacrifice. Blessed de la Salle accepted the order with perfect submission. An interior voice whispered to him that he was not called to direct a parish, and he was glad to find that the orders of his superiors agreed so fully with the dictates of his conscience.

The pious Canon fulfilled with unfailing regularity all the duties of his canonry. He was assiduous at office, and in the ancient

¹ In those days, it was not unusual in France to see parishes administered by clerics who were not yet raised to the priesthood. The functions of their charge were performed by priests who were sanctioned and authorized in the diocese.

sanctuary which had been the cradle of French Royalty, he took part in that public prayer which is the sign of enduring faith in France, and the proof of her power. In his own home, he gave long hours to prayer, and solitary communings with God. He also continued his studies, for, in sacred science, degrees are onward steps, and do not mark limitations in the road of knowledge to be traversed.

With all this, he had leisure for charity. But charity, like science, knows no bounds, and to embrace it wisely, we need a guide. Here again Blessed de la Salle found one in M. Roland.

M. Roland had made a vow to consecrate himself to the education of youth, and to found free schools for girls. Going to preach the Lent at Rouen, he became intimate with Father Barré, a missionary, who was very much occupied with the elementary schools. After thinking over the matter, he had come back to Rheims to carry out his scheme.

There was just then at Rheims an orphanage of thirty children founded by a dame Varlet, and which the town persisted in refusing to take charge of because of the expense it would involve. M. Roland asked to be allowed to take it up and manage it, and the request was granted with alacrity. The unfortunate children were badly fed, badly clothed, in bad health, and utterly bereft of care. M. Roland immediately supplied them with all the necessities, and henceforth his fortune was devoted to providing for them.

His solicitude extended beyond their temporal to their spiritual wants, and he watched carefully over their souls. Finding that the persons in charge of them were quite unfit for their office, being equally wanting in virtue and intelligence, he at once dismissed them, and applied to Father Barré for Daughters of Providence to replace them. Father Barré sent him Sister Franaisé, Superior of the house at Rouen, and two other mistresses of the same congregation. These were placed in charge of the orphanage. M. Roland appealed to some pious young women to come and help in the good work, and very soon a little community was formed.

M. Roland's zeal was indefatigable. Not satisfied with educating the children of his orphanage, he set his heart on educating the children of the town, and as soon as he had trained a few mistresses, he got permission to open free classes for girls in the orphanage.

A great number of young girls flocked in, and soon the school was so crowded, that it was necessary to open others. The number of Sisters multiplied rapidly; M. Roland hired rooms in various parts of the town, where they went every morning and held classes all day. He also trained mistresses for the country places; but the orphanage, which continued to be the centre of the work, was wholly devoted to children, and took the name of the Community of the Holy Child Jesus¹.

This excellent M. Roland was anxious to perfect the method of teaching. Whenever he heard of a famous school in any place, he set forth to visit it, and to enquire into the system employed there. He sent for experienced mistresses to teach the Sisters, and procured a choice library for their improvement. He had little by little initiated Blessed de la Salle into this work, being the more desirous of attaching him to it, because, owing to his own weak health, he feared leaving the Community without a protector. According as the work grew, contradictions and hindrances grew with it. The school-masters were jealous, the town was indifferent, even the ecclesiastical authorities were mistrustful and ill-disposed.

In 1677, M. Roland went to Paris in order to obtain through the Archbishop the legal recognition of his community; but the Archbishop took no heed of his request, and let him wait in his anti-room without condescending to pay him the slightest attention. M. Roland came back to Rheims without uttering a murmur, and attributed his failure to his sins: "God had better take me out of the world," he said, "for I only hinder His work²."

But all these obstacles did not wear out his charity; M. de la

¹ Manuscript life of M. Roland. Archives of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, at Rheims.
= ² *Ibid.*

Salle had encouraged and supported him. He also felt a deep tenderness for these forsaken children, and he loved them as the Saints know how to love.

While he was laboring in this cause, he was preparing himself for the priesthood. He received it, on the 9th of April 1678, from the hands of M^r Letellier, in the cathedral of Rheims, and it was in one of the Chapels of that same church that, on the following morning, he celebrated his first mass. He performed that great action with fervent piety, but without any outward show, fearing that external pomp might interfere with his recollection, and trembling lest he should lose a particle of the graces which abound in the soul of a man called for the first time to offer at the altar the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He ever retained in the same intense degree these sentiments of respect for this supreme prerogative of the priestly life. Faithful in the daily fulfilment of this duty, he allowed nothing to deter him from it. Even illness did not prevent him. When he was infirm, he still dragged himself to the altar, or was led there, and celebrated the Divine mysteries with such unction and piety, that the assistants were moved to tears, and more than once he was seen, after communion, motionless, like one unconscious and wrapt in prayer.

Eighteen days after his ordination, he lost his director, M. Roland. The latter, on his return from Paris, fell ill, on the 7th of April 1678, and after a terrible illness courageously borne, he gave up his soul to the Lord on the 27th of the same month, being only thirty five years old. In his last days, he appointed M. de la Salle his executor, and begged him to take care of the Community of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. He even gave him to understand that he believed him called to found a similar work himself.

Blessed de la Salle accepted courageously the legacy bequeathed him by his venerable friend. Nature shrunk from it. He was afraid of letting his piety evaporate amidst the distractions of manifold occupations. He had been ready enough to devote some of his spare time to the Community of the Holy Child Jesus, but

he had never dreamed of burdening himself with its direction. He owed it, however, to the memory of M. Roland not to let his undertaking fall to the ground, and he resolved to do what he could to secure and continue it.

His first care was to get the new work legally recognized so as to secure its position. This was no easy matter, for even M. Roland himself had failed to accomplish it. It was necessary to have the consent of the town, of the Archbishop, and to obtain letters patent registered in Parliament.

The administration of the town feared to impose the burden of a new Community on the citizens, the prudence of the Archbishop hesitated to approve officially a community that had scarcely had time to prove itself, and Parliament was not disposed to multiply religious congregations.

Blessed de la Salle took up the matter with his usual activity. He stirred up all his friends and relatives. He invoked the memory of M. Roland's virtues; he made much of the services rendered by the Sisters; he touched some, he convinced others, and ended by obtaining the formal and written authorization of the magistrates of the city.

This authorization was granted on the following conditions :—
“ The Daughters of the Child Jesus were to keep four free-schools in the four quarters of the town, the orphanage of dame Varlet was to be joined to the new community, which was to take charge of it; the Superioress was not to receive an orphan without a ticket from the town lieutenant, who might withdraw the child at the age of seven or eight to place it in the hospitals; finally, the Daughters of the Child Jesus were never to be cloistered¹. ”

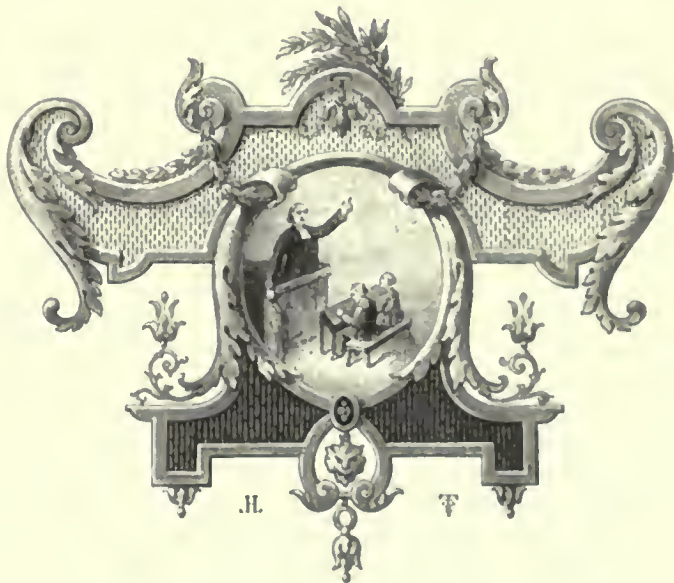
Blessed de la Salle promised to conform to these regulations, and this first victory gained over the obstinacy of the magistrates was the signal for a complete success. The Archbishop, hearing that the municipality had given in, pledged himself to obtain the consent of the King. He was the brother of M. de Louvois, and his in-

¹ Legislative Archives of Rheims, vol. I, pp. 130 and 470. (Collection of unpublished documents on the history of France.)

fluence was supreme. He had only to ask for the letters to get them; they were granted in 1679. The Archbishop had them registered at his own expense in the Parliament of Paris, and wished, moreover, to provide by his liberality for the future of a community which was a veritable seminary for school-mistresses. This community was, therefore, founded, endowed with a civil personality, recognized by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, and, differing in this respect from other charitable institutions of Rheims, it had a priest, M. Rogier, an intimate friend of M. Roland's, for sole administrator and director¹. All M. Roland's wishes were realized.

Having thus paid the debt of gratitude he had contracted towards him while under his direction, M. de la Salle went back to his own quiet life, and resumed the course of his habitual occupations.

¹ Legislative Archives of Rheims, vol. 1, pp. 130 and 478. (Collection of unpublished documents on the history of France.)





Rouen : general view in the life time of M. de la Salle. — It was to this town that he removed his Institute and it was here that he died. — Drawn by Fichot junior ; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER II.

VOCATION.



AFTER the pious and industrious employment of the years of his youth that we have attempted to describe, Blessed de la Salle was ready to accomplish great things. He had strong faith to stand out against trials, an enlightened mind to carry an undertaking safely through difficulties, and he had above all good will. Without any fixed plan of his own, he stood ready before Providence like a good workman who awaits the orders of his master.

Over and above these valuable qualities, he had those gifts that shine before the world, and which were far from being of no

account in the difficult mission to which he was called. He was rich, independent, and settled in a town where his family occupied an influential position. But that which human wisdom looks upon as a means, is often in the eyes of God an obstacle. Neither his fortune, nor his title, nor the influence of his relations was destined to be of use to his Institute. In laying the foundations of a work that was to last so long, God did not see fit to make use of these perishable elements. He did not need them. One man, without money, without credit, without renown, provided he were faithful and of good will, sufficed; he even suited better, for he let the hand of the Divine Architect remain more distinctly visible through the lines of the edifice he was to build.

Blessed de la Salle was truly the workman that Providence meant to employ; but he had not yet attained the necessary perfection; he still held on to the world by a thousand ties that, unknown to him, enthralled his liberty. He would, moreover, have been frightened by the grandeur of the scheme he was to accomplish if it had been revealed to him as a whole. So gigantic an undertaking would have appeared to him beyond his strength, and he would have recoiled from it. But he was brought to see it by degrees. God, with that infinite delicacy which takes into account all the infirmities of man, revealed to him his work day by day. M. de la Salle began to occupy himself with the schools without suspecting the difficulties that lay before him. When he came to measure their extent, it was too late to draw back, and he had to make up his mind to go on to the end. This line of action we have now to relate in detail.

There lived at Rouen a lady who had formerly been renowned for her vanity, and who still continued to excite public attention by her extraordinary conversion. *Mme de Maillefer* was a native of Rheims, where she still had relatives and friends. After her marriage, she came to live at Rouen, where her husband was Supervisor of Accounts. She had been endowed with fatal gifts, gifts which are full of peril for Christian souls—birth, fortune, beauty and wit. Her ardent nature had not been able to resist the

allurements that her position held out to her. She flung herself headlong into the vortex of pleasure, without heeding the abyss to which it led. No delicacies were too costly for her table, no gems too precious to adorn her beauty. Her one thought was to dazzle the crowd of her admirers. She lay a-bed till noon, in order, she said, to keep her mind undisturbed and spent the whole day arranging new toilets. On Sunday, she went to the last mass, not so much to pray, as to show off her splendid dresses, and outdo the women who attempted to rival her. Such was the person that God intended to make use of for the foundation of Christian schools, and who was to provide the first means for establishing them.

One day, a beggar knocked at M^{me} de Maillefer's door. Those whose soul is vain and sensual generally have a hard heart—M^{me} de Maillefer sent the beggar away rudely. But he was weary and sick, as well as hungry, and his miserable aspect, which failed to move the heart of the mistress, excited the compassion of her servants. M^{me} de Maillefer's coachman took the beggar into his stables. He died there in the night. What was to be done? They must bury the dead man, and, consequently, reveal to their mistress the act of charity they had dared to perform. The coachman confessed what he had done; M^{me} de Maillefer, furious at his daring to disobey her, dismisses him on the spot, and then throws him a sheet to bury this corpse that encumbers her stables. The beggar was buried; but that same evening, on sitting down to table, she saw the sheet she had flung so contemptuously to her servant, folded and laid before her. She turned angrily to know why it was there: had the burial not yet taken place? Yes, it had. The beggar was in his grave; but he would not accept after his death a present from one who had refused him a crust of bread when he was starving, and a mysterious hand had brought back the sheet which the servants had seen wrapped round the corpse, and supposed to be under the earth.

This incident produced a deep impression on M^{me} de Maillefer. She recognized the hand of God in it, and, like St Paul on the road to Damascus, she was converted instantaneously. She made up

her mind at once, and resolved to break off with the life she had been leading and with the world that had ruined her; she made this breach with resolute boldness. The following Sunday, she went to high mass at the parish, attired in her usual festive splendour, but wearing over her dress a kitchen apron, coarse and dirty. Nothing more was needed to lower her in the eyes of everybody who knew her; she was set down at once as a ridiculous devotee, and her friends all drew away from her. She had gained her object.

Her table was at once reformed, and all luxury banished from it. Vanity no longer held any place in her life. Her days were passed in the churches, at the foot of the Cross, or in the hovels of the poor. Her austerities were all the more incomprehensible in the eyes of the world from the contrast they formed to her past life, and she became the laughing-stock of the society whose idol she had so long been.

Her husband, who was charitable, without going so far in the way of perfection; her director, who was an enlightened man, sought to moderate a zeal which seemed to them exaggerated. She yielded with a good grace to their advice, but endeavoured to make up by secret penances for those that she renounced externally. Not long after this, her husband died, and she was left absolute mistress of her fortune and her conduct. Nothing henceforth, arrested her in the path of penance. She used to prostrate herself in the mud before the Crucifixes on the roadside. She used to kneel for hours at the doors of the churches, amidst the poor whose supplications she had so often spurned, accepting alms like them, and sometimes vituperated for taking her share of the pence thrown to them by the faithful as they passed. She, who formerly dwelt in a sumptuous mansion, now lived in a miserable little unfurnished room, where her only bed was a bundle of straw; her food consisted of mouldy bread and rancid soup, that she ate reflecting bitterly on the former waste and luxury that dishonored her table. A scarf of black linen replaced the fine pearls that used to adorn her neck. Her eyes, that had gazed only on vanity, were





now melted with weeping, and her unkempt hair suggested only contrition and grief.

For fifteen years, it was believed at Rouen that she had gone mad, and she did nothing to remove an error that gratified her humility; but people began, at last, to perceive the heroic virtue that was concealed under this excentric exterior. They found that her large fortune, none of which was spent upon herself, was now given to the poor, and devoted with rare wisdom to doing good. The folly of the Cross shone out through the folly of the world, and, after passing for a lunatic, *Mme de Maillefer* passed for a Saint.

The neglect of the children of the poor in their tender years was one of the forms of wretchedness which most attracted her solicitude. Father Barré was at Rouen at this period, and was beginning to put into execution a plan he had long cherished for the education of young girls. He also was to lend his hand to the foundation of the Christian schools. He was certainly one of the most esteemed advisers of Blessed de la Salle in the beginning of his undertaking, and had considerable influence over him. But, unlike *Mme de Maillefer*, Father Barré had always led a calm Christian life, and advanced towards perfection by the straight road.

Born at Amiens in 1620, thirty years before M. de la Salle, Father Barré entered in early youth the order of Minims, founded by St Francis of Paule; he was professed there, and during many years he taught theology with brilliant success. He was eminently pious, and stimulated every one around him to do good. His thoughts on Christian life were always expressed in strong and striking language, and he made use of the simplest things in daily life as images and symbols to illustrate the highest counsels of evangelical perfection.

The stamp of his direction is visible in the soul of Blessed de la Salle, and we shall constantly find him, in the various phases of his life, remembering and practising Father Barré's maxims.

Father Barré had been called from Paris to the convent at Rouen; he had spent fifteen years there, and had long and earnestly considered the best means of teaching the poor. Towards the year

1666, he finally made a beginning. He assembled some charitable women, trained them, and sent them to found free schools in three neighboring towns. Some months later, he opened four others in various quarters of Rouen.

The town's people were religious, and very charitable. Members of the clergy, Councillors of Parliament, barristers, interested themselves in the new work, and contributed funds towards its support, in spite of Father Barré's resistance, for he feared riches. The town of Rouen in this way came to be endowed with a seminary for school-mistresses which was to branch out all over Normandy.

M^{me} de Maillefer had been actively zealous in laying the foundation of the schools, and success inspired her with the desire to establish one at Rheims, her native town. She made acquaintance with Canon Roland in one of his visits to Rouen, and contributed towards the foundation of the community of the Daughters of the Child Jesus. This, however, did not satisfy her zeal, and she wished to found a similar school for boys. She confided this new idea to M. Roland, who approved of it, and they concerted together as to the means of realizing it, when the death of the holy canon seemed to put an end to the whole scheme.

But M^{me} de Maillefer resolved not to give it up, and God having taken one helpmate from her, she at once set about finding another.

There was then at Rouen a pious layman named Adrien Nyel, who had interested himself in the children of the poor all his life. He was a native of Beauvais¹, and had apparently been called to Rouen by M. Laurent de Bimorel, administrator of the hospital. In 1657, he was appointed, at a salary of a hundred francs, to instruct the young men of the Office in Christian doctrine, to teach them to read and write, and at the same time he had to look after the house. Later on, he occupied himself with the children who were serving as apprentices, or placed out as servants. He found out some poor laymen who, for the meagre remuneration of fifty francs a year, undertook to be at one and the same time teachers,

¹ Not the city of Beauvais, but a village of the same name in the diocese of Laon.

sacristans and infirmarians, under the direction of the Relieving Office. They called themselves Brothers. Piety was the sole motive of their vocation, and, without being bound by any vow, they generally remained faithful to it.

M. Nyel held a somewhat independent position in the Office, and was greatly esteemed. He was intimate with one of the administrators of the hospital whom we have mentioned, M. Laurent de Bimorel, who, before his death, bequeathed to the establishment a considerable income to keep up two charity schools, of which M. Nyel was named director for life, being also lodged and boarded in the house.

M. Nyel's whole life had thus been passed amidst children, and it was unanimously agreed that he was the best man to found schools at Rheims. Being of an enterprising nature, he accepted *Mme de Maillefer's* offer, and set out for Rheims. He was then fifty-nine years of age. Before leaving Rouen, he gave to the Relieving Office a sum of thirteen hundred francs for the poor, on condition that the Office should pay him a hundred francs annuity, and have prayers offered up for his soul after his death.

Mme de Maillefer signed an engagement to allow him a salary of one hundred crowns¹ for his support and that of a lad of fourteen that he took with him. She gave him, moreover, letters of introduction— one for Blessed de la Salle, to whom she was related, and another for the Superior of the Sisters of the Child Jesus, whom she had known at Rouen, where that Religious had directed the Community of Providence.

M. Nyel arrived at Rheims armed with *Mme de Maillefer's* instructions, but never dreaming of the great work of which he was to be the first instrument. Blessed de la Salle himself was far from thinking then of the schools.

More than once, charitable persons had endeavoured to turn his zeal in that direction, but without success. Educated in an exclusive society, of refined manners and intellectual conversation, he

¹ An *écu* (crown) was worth three francs.

felt little interest in those school-masters, who were men of obscure condition, narrow minds and rough manners. If any one had foretold to him that he would one day be their father and their friend, and that his life was to be spent in evoking and directing the self-sacrifice that was hidden under those rude exteriors, he would have scouted the notion. But God glories in sending his grace to overcome nature, and compel it to act against inclination.

Blessed de la Salle was, moreover, a humble and docile soul. He thought very little of himself, he did not trouble himself as to the mission appointed him, nor peer curiously into the future, but strove simply to do his duty from day to day.

When Canon Roland, his director, spoke to him about the community of the Child Jesus, he took an interest in the work out of deference for its founder. Later, he interested himself in it to fulfil the last wishes of a dying man; but he viewed it in the light of a passing incident that was not destined to take a lasting place in his life. As soon as he got the community legally recognized, he considered that he had done all that was to be expected of him.

He had, however, kept up friendly and confidential intercourse with the Superioress of the Community. One day, he went to see her, and as he reached the door, he found a stranger there in the act of knocking. The stranger had come from Rouen, bearing letters for the Superioress, whom he wished to consult on a matter of importance. M. de la Salle allowed him to pass in first; but in a few minutes, he was himself sent for by the Superioress, who begged him to assist at the interview. The stranger was M. Nyel.

Blessed de la Salle listened with great interest to his plan, but at a glance he seized all its difficulties. A new foundation interferes with vested interests, knocks against the general indifference, and meets a host of natural enemies in all those narrow-minded persons who set their faces against anything they have not themselves invented. The girls' school had not been founded at Rheims without difficulty; but the boys' school was likely to provoke far greater opposition. The official school-master would see his authority

threatened; the magistrates would tremble at the prospect of new taxes on the town; the kindness of the Archbishop was likely to have been exhausted by all he had done for the Community of the



The Rev. Father Barré, from a contemporary portrait. — Drawn by Taddée; engraved by Mœaulle.

Child Jesus. All these reasons must be weighed and discussed in secret, before rousing the opposition that was inevitable. It was necessary that the arrival of M. Nyel, and above all the object of his visit, should be kept a profound secret.

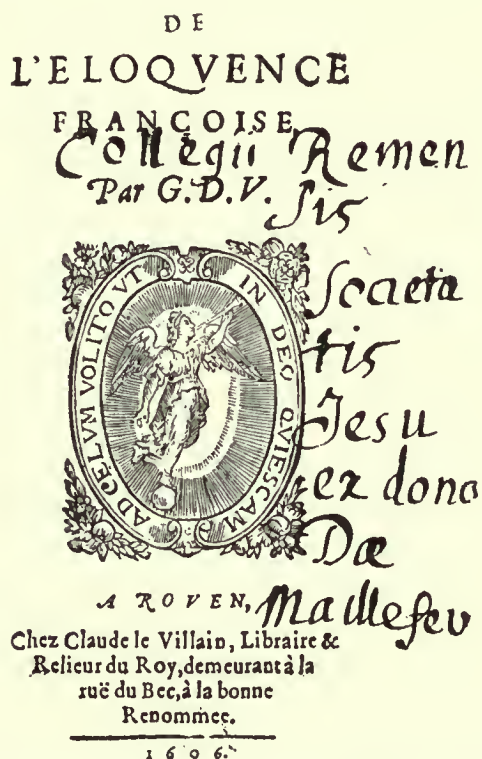
M^{me} de Maillefer had desired him to go and stay at the house of her brother; Blessed de la Salle dissuaded him from this. "In going to M. de Maillefer's house," he said, "you proclaim your scheme, and in proclaiming it you foil it. Your residence there will excite suspicion as to the motive of your coming. The wide social distance between you and your host will set people wondering what brings you here as his guest. They will ask questions, and gossip, and you will be the butt of all the idle busy bodies of the place; your every step will be watched and pried after, and when it is found out what you are seeking, every door will be shut against you."

Blessed de la Salle was so convinced of the truth of what he urged, that he offered M. Nyel hospitality in his own house, in order to screen him from the inevitable consequences of being M. de Maillefer's guest. "Come to me," he said; "my house is an inn where ecclesiastics are in the habit of stopping. You look just like a country pastor; you will easily pass for one. At any rate, I have a right to lodge whom I choose. I don't care what people think, and still less what they say. You can easily pass a week in my house unnoticed. This will give you time to reflect, to look about you. You can then make a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Liesse as you intended, and, on your return, you can make an attempt to open the school."

M. Nyel accepted the hospitality that was thus kindly offered to him, and wrote to M^{me} de Maillefer to announce the good beginning he had made. Meantime, Blessed de la Salle consulted Almighty God, his guide in all things, for although he heartily approved of the undertaking, he knew not how to set about it. Mistrusting his own lights, he resolved to submit the difficulty to some pious ecclesiastics of the town, amongst others, the Reverend Father Claude de Bretagne, prior of Saint-Remi, and afterwards prior of the abbey of Saint Germain-des-Prés, in Paris.

They met at the house of the pious Canon, and held private conferences to examine into the affair. M. de la Salle's advice was to confide the school to a parish-priest who would be zealous

enough to take the management of it, discreet enough not to talk about it, and generous enough to support it. After reflecting well on this vital point, Blessed de la Salle was of opinion that they ought to address themselves to the parish-priest of Saint Maurice, M. Dorigny, a man of zeal, firmness and piety, and whom they



Title-page of a book given to the College of Rheims by M^{me} de Maillefer, a relative of Blessed de la Salle, and who played a great part in the foundation of the Christian Schools.

all judged capable of ensuring the success of the venture, if he would consent to undertake it. Everybody agreed that this was sound advice, and all begged M. de la Salle himself to open the matter to M. Dorigny.

Works that are in God's design, in spite of the trials they have to pass through, meet with extraordinary helps at their birth. The hills are levelled to make way for them, and one feels that the spirit of God moves souls towards them. It so happened that M. Dorigny was thinking of opening free schools in his parish, when Providence sent him both the man and the money wherewith

to carry out his design. He received the overture with joy, and insisted on having at his table both M. Nyel and the young companion who assisted him in the class. *Mme de Maillefer's* annuity sufficed to cover all expenses, and the school was opened in 1679. It was the first kernel of the Christian schools, and M. de la Salle, having helped it on so successfully, considered his interference and responsibility at an end.

Again he was mistaken. Providence, seeing how faithful he was, had no intention of curtailing his destined mission, of which this first achievement was only an outline. He was obedient to grace, and grace was about to lead him whither he knew not.

M. Nyel had kept up constant intercourse with Blessed de la Salle. He often came to see him, consulted him in his difficulties, and sometimes wanted little services which the kindly Canon rendered him with pleasure. Neither the one nor the other had any future plans, or dreamed of any future partnership.

A few months later, a pious lady of the parish of St James, *Mme Catherine Leclerc*, widow of M. Antoine Levêque de Croyère, heard about this school of Saint Maurice, and conceived the idea of endowing her parish with a similar one. She was rich and childless; she was dangerously ill, and wished for nothing better than to devote part of her fortune to good works.

M. Nyel, who dreamed only of foundations and of seeing his dear schools planted everywhere, heard of her wish, and hastened to see her. He laid his plans before her, explained what steps were to be taken, and, to strengthen her further in her good resolutions, he assured her that M. de la Salle, who had consented to be the protector of the Saint-Maurice school, would lend her his help.

But when Blessed de la Salle heard this, he did not show the promised alacrity to coöperate in the new venture. He was of opinion that the work ought not to be too widely diffused before it was consolidated. He did not wish, however, to be an obstacle in the way of a good work, so he went to see *Mme de Croyère*, who was anxious to talk the matter over with him.

She congratulated him on the good he had done in the parish of Saint Maurice, and implored him to second her wishes :— “ I must profit by this favorable opportunity, ” she said, “ for it is already some time since God first put this thought into my heart, and I should be greatly comforted to see it carried out before I die. ”

She offered an annuity of five hundred francs on her income for the foundation, and to leave at her death a sum of ten thousand francs to secure it after her. Blessed de la Salle could not withstand these earnest entreaties. The terms were accepted, and M^{me} de Croyère died six weeks later without having enjoyed her good action. Her heirs carefully carried out her intentions, and the school was opened in the month of September 1679. M. Nyel himself took charge of it, having placed other masters at the head of the Saint-Maurice school.

The new school was soon as flourishing as the first, and later on, the parish of Saint Jacques itself, which inherited M^{me} de Croyère's rights, pledged itself legally to give the Brothers the interest of a capital of ten thousand francs.

So the schools rose by degrees, and Blessed de la Salle found himself committed, so to speak, unawares. He has left us a charming account of his own feelings and the way that Providence worked to compass the purpose it had in view. “ It was, ” he tells us in one of his Memoirs, “ through a meeting with M. Nyel, and a proposal of M^{me} de Croyère's that I was led to take charge of the boys' schools. I had no idea of doing it. Not but that it had been proposed to me. Several friends of M. Roland's had tried to persuade me into it; but they could not get it into my head, and it did not occur to me to undertake it. If I had even dreamed that the care I took of the masters out of pure charity would one day lead to my living with them, I would have given up the whole thing at once; for, as I naturally looked on those whom I employed in the schools, especially in the beginning, as far beneath me, the mere thought of having to live with them would have been intolerable.

“ I felt a great repugnance, indeed, when they used to come to my house for the first two years. It was apparently, on this account, that God, who does all things gently and wisely, and does not as a rule force men against their inclinations, brought it about so imperceptibly and gradually, that one engagement led me to another, and I found myself committed to the entire care of the schools without having foreseen anything. ”

M. Nyel was the nominal superior of the dawning community. He taught the class and managed the children well; but he was much less skillful in managing the masters.

Active, too active perhaps, often absent travelling, always full of new plans, he was not the one to inspire recollection in the masters and that spirit of regularity that is essential to the fostering of vocations. Blessed de la Salle saw these defects, and strove to make up for them. He could not but feel interested in a community which he had been chiefly instrumental in founding. He went there frequently, and was helpful to it in many ways. There were five masters for the two schools, and they were all lodged in the house of the parish-priest of Saint Maurice; but the house had now become too small for so many people; they were ill at ease in it, and their means were very straitened, the resources of the community all told consisting in *Mme de Maillefer's* three hundred francs and the five hundred of *Mme de Croyère*, whereas they would have required at least a thousand.

Blessed de la Salle could not, without being moved to pity, see the wretched plight of the poor masters. It occurred to him that the best way to help them would be to hire a house close to his own where he could lodge them, and have food carried to them from his own kitchen, and thus greatly reduce their expenses. He consulted M. Nyel about the plan, and the latter having approved it, he hired on a lease of eighteen months a house behind Saint Symphorien, near the rampart, not far from his own, and installed the masters there on the 25th of December 1679.

When they were settled in their new abode, Blessed de la Salle wrote out a rule for them, so that their life might be well ordered.

and their work and hours well proportioned. He fixed the hours for rising and going to bed, for prayer, for meals, and he used continually to look in to assure himself that the rule was duly observed.

Meantime, M. Nyel had improved the opportunity by opening a third school in this new house for the children of the district, and it was soon as full as the other two.

So passed the year 1680.

All this time, Blessed de la Salle was going on with his theological studies at the University of Rheims. He passed his examinations, maintained his theses, and in 1681 received the Doctor's cap at the age of thirty. Science seemed to be removing him farther and farther from that primary popular education which was to absorb his life. "I imagined," he writes in his Memoirs, that the direction of the schools and the masters, being merely an exterior direction, committed me to nothing more than providing them with the necessaries, and taking care that the latter acquitted themselves of their duty with piety and assiduity." He was mistaken; the care of them was to be his exclusive occupation, and these very studies that he was pursuing with so much ardor, were only to be of use hereafter in guiding him to direct the rising Institute, and to preserve his future disciples from the theological errors into which sectarians would one day try to ensnare them.

Insensibly, Blessed de la Salle was being rivetted to the schoolmasters.

Although he found them uncouth in manner, he admired their good will, and considered them as emissaries charged to bring souls to Jesus Christ. It behoved them, therefore, to form themselves on that model, and he labored indefatigably to make them perfect. He could not, however, devote as much time to them as they required. The canonical office took up a portion of his day, and, added to this, he had his hours for study, his own business, his family, and could only attend to the masters in odd moments, as it were by stealth.

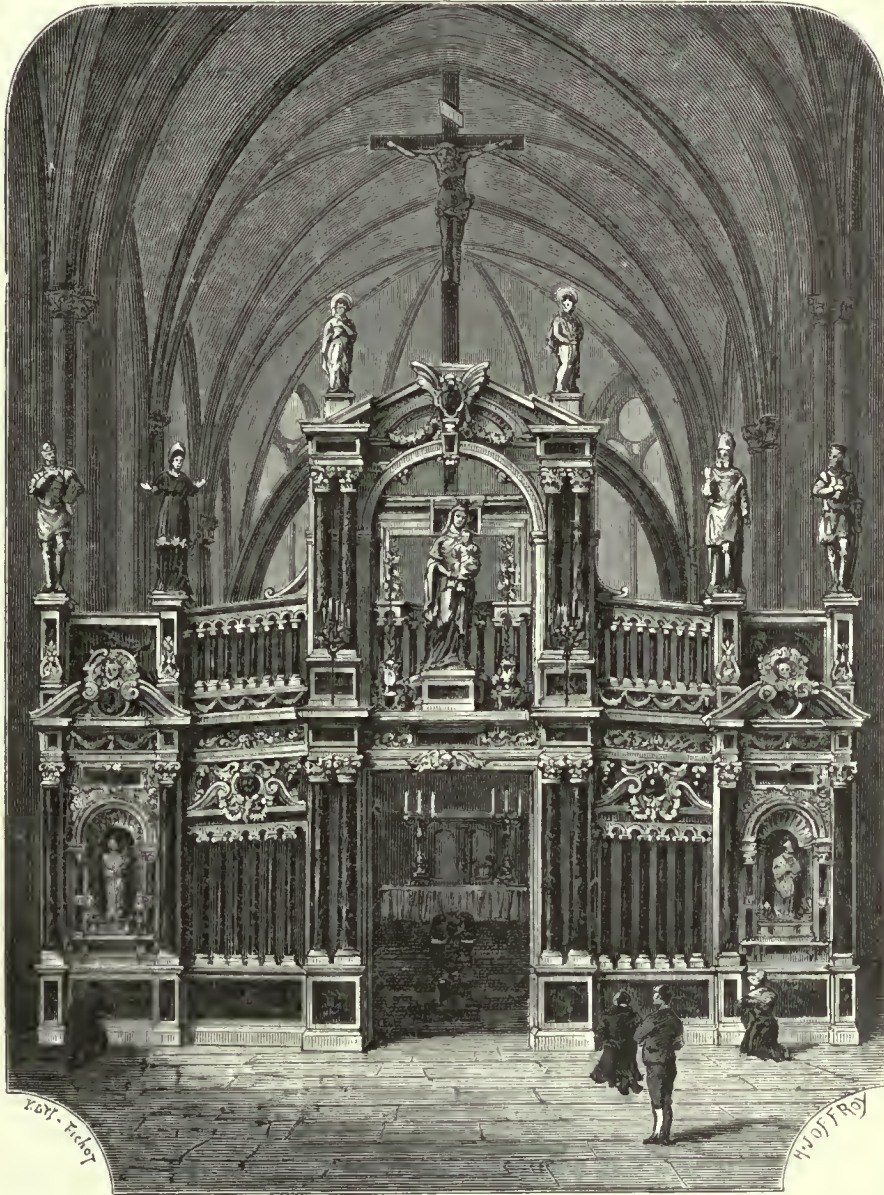
He thought it all over, and saw that there was nothing for it



Church of Notre-Dame de Liesse (p. 126). — Drawn by P. Legrand.

but to let them take their meals at his table, instead of having

their food carried out to them; the expense to him would be the same, and he could utilize the hour spent at table. Having



Church of Notre-Dame de Liesse. — Drawn by Fichot junior; engraved by H. Joffroy.

decided that this was the best plan, he at once adopted it. The school-masters came and sat at board with him twice a day. One of them read aloud, and the holy priest took advantage

of this to make them a little discourse on the duties of their calling.

This growing intimacy, and the rapid way the schools were encroaching upon his life, began to cause his family some anxiety, and they remonstrated with him. "Such work," they said, "was not fit for him; he was letting himself be absorbed by it to the neglect of more imperious duties. Before busying himself about strangers, he owed himself to his brothers who lived with him, and on whom he had no right to force such company." Blessed de la Salle made no answer to this. The good he was doing the masters was manifest, and not to be relinquished. He was bound even to prefer it to his own benefit, and to try and make this work fit in with his other duties. He already began to find the hour of meals too short, and to reckon up all the stray moments during the day that he might turn to account for the masters if they were near him. Yet he hesitated still to take them altogether into his house because of the opposition he was sure to encounter.

Just at this juncture, the town of Guise, which is next to Rheims, manifested a great zeal for charity schools. Mlle de Guise had opened three for girls, and had applied to Father Barré for mistresses. The aldermen wanted others to be founded for boys, and as they had heard of those in Rheims, they went to M. Nyel, and begged him to come and organize some in their town. M. Nyel could not resist such an invitation. In vain did Blessed de la Salle represent to him that he could not absent himself, and compromise for an uncertainty a work already founded, but still weak, and leave the young masters without direction; such a line of action could not draw down God's blessing, and so rash a venture could not succeed. But M. Nyel was not to be moved from his purpose.

His absence, he said, would be short, and he could not miss so good a chance as this. He started off, accordingly, in Holy Week of the year 1681, reckoning secretly on Blessed de la Salle replacing him. The latter could not, indeed, make up his mind

to leave the young masters without supervision, even for a few days. They rose at five o'clock, made their meditation, and heard mass at six. He wished that, on coming out of church, instead of going home, they should come to his house, and spend the day there, except during the class-hours when they were at the schools. All the rest of the time they were with him, eating in the same refectory, each receiving his portion, and performing all their duties at a fixed hour until night prayers, when they went to their own house to sleep.

This lasted for eight days, when M. Nyel came back from Guise without having founded his school; but, in this interval, Blessed de la Salle had discovered in the lives of the masters certain grave disorders to which a prompt remedy must be applied if the work was not to fall to pieces. There were many drawbacks attendant on M. Nyel's wandering life. He acknowledged it himself without seeing his way to mend the evil, and seeing the marked improvement that had taken place in the masters during the week they had been under Blessed de la Salle's direction, he besought him to take them into his house altogether.

The holy man was grievously perplexed. The lease of the hired house was nearly run out, and expired on the feast of St John the Baptist. Should he renew it, or take the masters into his own house? It was a serious matter to decide. Not only would it involve a complete change in his own daily life, hamper him with new burdens, extra fatigue and anxiety, but it would arouse the anger of his friends and the opposition of his family. What a battle he would have to fight to make them consent to it!

He could not decide without taking advice, so he set out for Paris to consult Father Barré, who was living in a convent of his order in the Place Royale. After passing fifteen years at Rouen, Father Barré had returned to Paris in 1675, and had founded schools there. The first was opened in 1677 in the parish of Saint Jean-en-Grève, and he had founded at the same time a seminary for school-mistresses. There were thirty of them, and

they went every day to hold classes in the parishes of Saint Eustache, Saint Laurent and Saint Louis-en-Pile.

Father Barré had also interested himself in the education of boys, but without success. He gathered into the parish of Saint Gervais a certain number of Brothers who had fallen into evil courses, and ended by deserting their calling.

Blessed de la Salle laid before him the state of the schools at Rheims; told him how he had been imperceptibly led into taking the direction of them; explained the results that had been obtained, and the difficulties that had still to be overcome. On hearing all this, the saintly Religious no longer hesitated. He saw clearly now why it was that he, who had put his hand to this work, had not been able to found it. Blessed de la Salle was the man destined to accomplish the mission, and the very obstacles in his way were so many means to the end—for God makes use of trials to strengthen the souls of His workmen. Father Barré left nothing undone to carry this conviction into the mind of the future founder. “The grandest designs of God on a soul,” he said, “are only achieved through contradictions. Exterior and interior trials and afflictions slaughter nature, but they invigorate the soul. As you could get no wine out of the grape without crushing it in the wine-press, neither can a soul produce any great work until it has been in the wine-press of temptations, persecutions, tribulations and afflictions. The perfect Christian ought to be like the cock on the church steeple that turns with every wind without ever coming out from under the cross¹.” Blessed de la Salle was deeply impressed by these counsels, and left Paris with his mind fully made up.

On the 24th of June 1681, the feast of his patron, St John the Baptist, he took the whole Community into his house. This final step exasperated his family to the last degree, and excited the wonder of society beyond all bounds. Up to this point, it had been possible to hope that his scheme would not go beyond

¹ *Spiritual Maxims*, by Rev. Father Barré, p. 26.

encouraging a useful work, as any good man might do; he had directed souls, as in duty bound by his priestly office, but this had not absorbed him to the detriment of all other occupations; now, however, the secondary work had suddenly become the principal, almost the exclusive one. He gave himself up to it wholly; he seemed to have no other concern on earth but to direct school-masters. The world laughed at him, the world does not understand the beauty of Divine work, and knows not what charity is. It laughed at this man of good birth who demeaned himself to such low company; at this Doctor who sought the companionship of poor teachers whose business was to point out *a b c* to children, and who knew little more than their pupils. In fact, people were almost scandalized to see a Canon stooping to such an office. As to his family, their indignation knew no bounds. They were humiliated, and injured in their dearest interests. They had dreamed of Church dignities for M. de la Salle, honors to which his birth and his talents naturally called him, and they now beheld him giving himself up to work which could bring him neither honor nor profit.

Blessed de la Salle, guardian of his brothers, was the eldest and the head of the family. His other relations were in the habit of dining with him at stated times, and these repasts were an opportunity for talking over the family interests and affairs, and keeping alive concord and affection amongst all the members. These meetings, formerly a source of Christian recreation and delight to Blessed de la Salle, were now a trial and a suffering to him, for his relations took the opportunity to upbraid him concerning his absurd purpose. As soon as they began on this chapter, he would fold his arms on his breast, and listen with the patience of an angel, answering nothing.

The arguments they brought forward were not of the kind that could influence him, or shake his determination. What did it matter to him that the school-masters were men of low birth, if they were servants of God; that their manners were coarse, if their conscience was delicate; that they made a poor figure with their black coat and thin white collar, if they filled a great function?

But the unceasing reproaches of his family made some impression on his brothers, and two of them left him. The eldest, who loved him tenderly, would not separate from him, and continued to live in the same house. The second went away and took up his abode with a brother-in-law; the third, who was younger, was removed and placed at school with the Canons regular at Senlis. This grieved Blessed de la Salle, but it did not discourage him. All the ties that bound him to the world were being broken, one by one, in order to make the final breach easier. He felt himself freer. But suddenly a terrible trial was sent to him: he began to doubt.

At the very moment when he was sacrificing the affection of his family and the approval of the world, he asked himself if he was not pursuing a phantom, and if the work he loved was not going to vanish from him like a shadow. The masters that M. Nyel had brought together, and who had grown used to an independant life while he directed them, would not bear the regularity which Blessed de la Salle exacted from them. The greater number had no vocation; M. Nyel had taken them here and there, as chance offered, without discernment. When they found themselves in a house as regular in its rules as a monastery, where they were treated like Religious, after having stipulated simply to be school-masters, they slunk away, one after the other. A few had to be dismissed as incompetent, so that in a short time the house was almost empty. Only two masters remained faithful.

This exodus was a terrible blow to Blessed de la Salle. His work seemed on the point of perishing. After having braved the reproaches of his relatives, the criticisms of his brother priests, and the malignity of outsiders, he was going to find himself with nothing left but his shattered scheme. He held on bravely, he prayed, and, lo! before the end of the year 1682 new subjects began to arrive. Blessed de la Salle had already put in practice the exercises that are still followed in the Institute, so the new-comers could have no illusions. They knew what they were committing themselves to, and understood the obligations they were about to

contract. By their piety and their aptitude for teaching, their self-devotion and spirit of community life, they showed that they were chosen of God.

Blessed de la Salle continued more devoted than ever to them. He was like the courageous laborer who hesitates to put his hand to the plough, but who, once the ploughing is begun, drives his furrow straight on, unmindful of stones and thorns. He lived with the masters, and strove to fashion them more and more into a religious community. Without imposing practices on them as one in authority, he made them feel the necessity of them, inspired them with the desire of prayer and self-denial, and led them to embrace observances which seemed to be their own suggestion rather than his. Finally, when a resolution was adopted, he saw that it was faithfully carried out, and was the first to set an example of constancy.

In order to train all these souls of such varied callings and with such opposite dispositions, to cut and fashion them like stones that are to fit into a noble and solid building, a great unity in spiritual direction was necessary. The choice of a confessor was even more important than the choice of a superior. Blessed de la Salle made the masters understand the necessity of all confessing to the same priest.

They sought a fitting one long and earnestly; but the right man was not easy to find: one was good and capable, but he had not the right spirit, and disheartened the Brothers; another was all they wanted, but he lived too far off, and so on with many others. These repeated failures at last determined them to appeal to M. de la Salle himself. He was their superior, their father; he lived with them, and knew, as no one else could know, the point they had started from, and the one for which they aimed. He was both firm and gentle, and he had their whole confidence. They besought him to become their director. He, however, hesitated long before consenting; he feared that difficulties might arise from the functions of temporal superior and spiritual director being united in one person. He took counsel with several enlight-

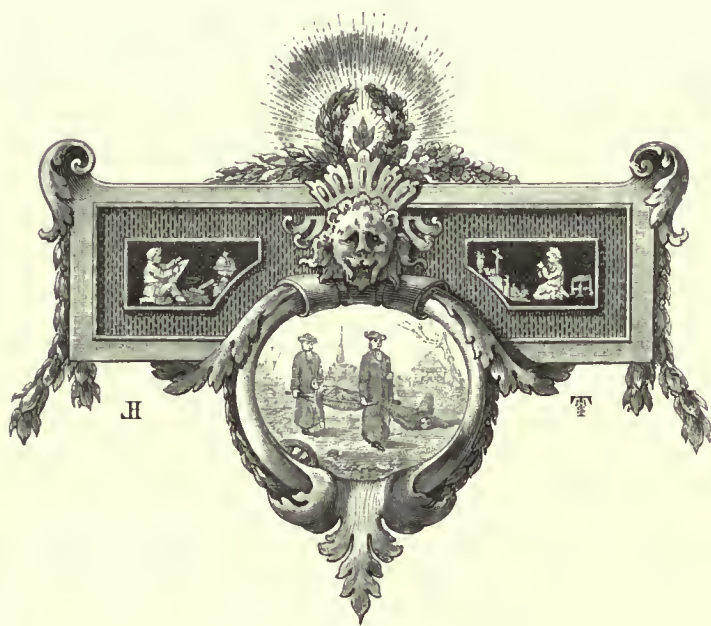
ened ecclesiastics, who advised him not to be deterred by this scruple. He yielded, therefore, to the desire of the masters, and while he lived remained their confessor.

At Christmas tide in the year 1681, M. Nyel left Rheims. He was delighted at the improvement he saw in the house, and, judging his presence no longer necessary there, he gave himself up with a clear conscience to his passion for travelling, and set out to found new schools. Blessed de la Salle was now left quite alone in the direction and management of the house at Rheims.

About this time an event occurred which brought him to the brink of the grave, and increased still more his confidence in God. He was riding home from the country; the snow lay thick on the ground, filling up the ditches and blotting out the roads. M. de la Salle lost his way, and fell into a deep hole. He called out for help; no one came. The place was lonely as a desert, the bad weather kept all travellers away. He strove in vain for a long time to get out of the pit; night was coming on, his position was hopeless. He had recourse to God, and God hearkened to his prayer. After a last violent effort, he succeeded in climbing up to the level ground, and found his way, but not without bearing ever after traces of the danger he had run; he received internal injuries which were a source of suffering to him all his life, but which served chiefly to keep alive in his heart the remembrance of the mercy God had shown him in rescuing him from a certain death. He never spoke of the circumstance without profound gratitude.

Blessed de la Salle had remained hitherto with his disciples in the house of his fathers; but it was ill adapted to its new destination, and was situated in too frequented a neighborhood, where the stir of business and the gay world disturbed the school-masters. The holy priest looked out for a quieter abode, and after a good deal of trouble found one at the entrance of the Rue Neuve, opposite Sainte-Claire, in the faubourg Saint-Remy, which answered his purpose; so he hired it, and the community moved into it on the 24th of June 1682, the feast of his patron, St John the Baptist. The Brothers never afterwards left it.

In leaving the paternal house, Blessed de la Salle broke off with his past. He said good-bye to the memories of his childhood, to the joys of his youth, and to all that had surrounded his life up to this time. He had now moved farther away than ever from his kindred, his friends and the world, and he was advancing towards an unknown future with no guiding star but his love for God.





Laon, where Blessed de la Salle founded one of his first houses (p. 159). — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Barbant.

CHAPTER III.

SACRIFICE.



y his fidelity to grace from the earliest years of his life, Blessed de la Salle had deserved to be called to the highest duties. He had kept his youth free from sin, and, in taking orders, he consecrated himself wholly to God's service. And, lo! God, to reward his generosity, had come and taken him by the hand, and had, without his knowledge, confided to him an incomparable work, the Christian education of childhood.

The mere strength of human nature did not suffice for such an undertaking, and one man, whatever might have been

his genius and his perseverance would not have compassed it. It needed more than courage, more than genius : it needed sanctity.

Blessed de la Salle, before undertaking his great work, had first to accomplish a work on himself. He had still to purify his life, which he had preserved thus far in piety and the fear of God. He was to rise from the easy virtues of youth to the more arduous duties of evangelical perfection, to renounce honors, fortune, family affections, his own inclinations, in order to give to these poor children whom God confided to him, a heart no longer held captive by a single earthly tie.

Grace had called M. de la Salle : this we saw in the last chapter. M. de la Salle corresponded to grace by a complete sacrifice of himself : this is what we shall see in the following pages. Nothing could be more interesting than the object of such a narrative, rather of such a drama.

The Christian schools, once solidly established in Rheims, began to spread beyond their centre, like those plants which, having taken root, put out fresh branches on every side. In many towns, the municipalities and the clergy, struck by the necessity for organizing education for the poor, were deterred by the difficulty of finding masters. The fact that Rheims had excellent ones soon became known in the neighboring districts, and the desire arose to obtain others like them.

Rethel was the first town that made a demand for them. In 1682, the aldermen and the parish-priests addressed themselves to Blessed de la Salle, and begged him to found a school in their town, promising to furnish the necessary funds. The holy priest hesitated. He feared that too rapid a growth might exhaust his new-born Institute, and that by developing too quickly, it might perish away. In order to confide the direction of schools to masters removed from under his own watchful eye, it was necessary that the masters should have gained strength in their vocation by a long novitiate, and he only had at his disposal young men of still uncertain vocations and untried virtue. He was,





therefore, inclined to refuse, at least for the present, all proposals from without.

He rightly believed that in the life of every foundation there are two periods : a period of preparation during which the elements are fermenting and organizing, and a period of expansion when the sap rises, and circulates, and produces fruit; in other words, the hidden life and the public life, the movement of concentration and the movement of propagation. Such is, in fact, the law which regulates the development of all created beings, from the plant up to man; and it applies equally to works, and those works that ignore it run the risk of dying of inanition. We have seen only too many and too striking examples of this.

Blessed de la Salle had, however, reckoned without M. Nyel, whose impatience could ill brook these delays. His way was to go as far as he could from one foundation to another. He volunteered to go off at once to Rethel and manage the whole thing by himself. Soon a new and weighty influence was brought to bear on M. de la Salle : this was the Duc de Mazarin, who strongly supported the demand of the aldermen, and offered to contribute to the maintenance of the masters. After this, there was no holding in M. Nyel. He set out to Rethel, hired a house, and the Duc de Mazarin, the parish-priest and a charitable person named M^{lle} Bouralletti, gave the necessary funds. The school was opened in 1682. The sympathy it met with gave Blessed de la Salle the idea of buying a house at Rethel soon afterwards for the purpose of establishing his seminary there.

But the schools were not to go on flourishing without obstacles. It was necessary that their basis should be solidly established, and the trials of their founder were, in a measure, the price to be paid for their development. M. de la Salle, having gone to Rethel, the Duc de Mazarin, who held him in the greatest esteem, wished to make his acquaintance; he honored him with a visit, and proposed to him to raise an annuity on the ducal domains to secure the support of several masters. Blessed de la Salle gratefully accepted this advantageous proposal. The contract was settled; but some

ill-disposed mischief-makers meddled in the affair, and it fell to the ground. The pious Canon suffered the disappointment without a murmur. He knew that, according to Father Barré's maxim, "we must, in order to arrive at humility, be very glad not to succeed even in the concerns that God gives us to do for His own glory."

Some time afterwards, two rich inhabitants of Rethel died, and left him a considerable sum, to make the foundation he had in view; but no sooner had he got all the necessary deeds and titles in hand, then the heirs refused to carry out the will. Blessed de la Salle gave up the legacy rather than go to law about it.

This never-failing patience ended by triumphing over the most obstinate resistance, and carried him through all difficulties and opposition. In 1685, M. de Mazarin took up the scheme which had fallen through some years before at Rethel. He gave a capital of three thousand two hundred francs, the interest of which was to go to support a community of young men who were preparing to be school-masters. This community was under the management of two directors named by Blessed de la Salle, and dates from 1685.

On the 22th of September of the same year, a similar foundation was made on the estate of the Marquis of Mont-Cornet, and M. de Mazarin contributed three burses to the establishment.

Soon after Rethel got its school, the town of Château-Portien said it must have one. On the 20th of June 1682, the dean of the aldermen wrote to Blessed de la Salle to ask him for masters. The letter was so pressing that M. de la Salle answered it the same day:— "Even if I took but little interest in what concerns the glory of God, I should be very hardened not to be moved by the earnest prayers of your dean and by the obliging manner in which you have done me the honor to write to me to-day. It would be very wrong of me, Gentlemen, not to send you masters, seeing your ardour and eagerness for the Christian education of your children. I beg you, therefore, to believe that I have nothing more at heart than the seconding of your good intentions, and no

later than next Saturday I will send you two masters, with whom I hope you will be satisfied, to open your school the day after the feast of St Peter. ”

The promise was punctually kept, and the school opened. The town of Guise again came forward. The year before, M. Nyel had gone there, but he had failed to found a school. He had scarcely been six months at Rethel when Guise called him back, and was ready to accept all his conditions. The aldermen gave the house, and M^{lle} de Guise paid the salary of the masters. M. Nyel found some one to replace him at Rethel, and came to put the new school in working order.

Next came the town of Laon. The aldermen, the parish-priest of Saint-Pierre and the Abbot of Saint-Martin had all coalesced to start this noble and useful enterprise. The town gave the house, and provided part of the salary; the Religious and the parish-priest furnished the rest. M. Nyel at once came flying to Laon, and, having placed the Guise school in safe hands, took the management of this new one, which he continued to direct for two years; a considerable time for him to remain stationary, who was always moving from place to place. But from this centre his solicitude reached out to all the neighboring schools, for Blessed de la Salle would only undertake the direction of those at Rheims. He had numerous other occupations. Over and above the duties of his canonry, the Archbishop, who knew his zeal, employed him sometimes in divers missions. Then in 1684, the Vicars general of Rheims sent him to convert a neighboring little town that had fallen away from all religious practices. He undertook the mission, and owing to God's blessing, he succeeded in it.

M. de la Salle held to doing thoroughly everything that he undertook, and therefore he followed the wise principle of not undertaking more than he could accomplish. Towards the end of the year 1682, it seemed to him, he tells us, that God was calling him to take charge of the schools, and that, as he had to be first at all the exercises of the community, he could not be as assiduous at the Divine office as was expected of him. For the

first time, it occurred to him to resign his canonry. But this was an important step not to be lightly decided on. He prayed, and reflected long before making up his mind.

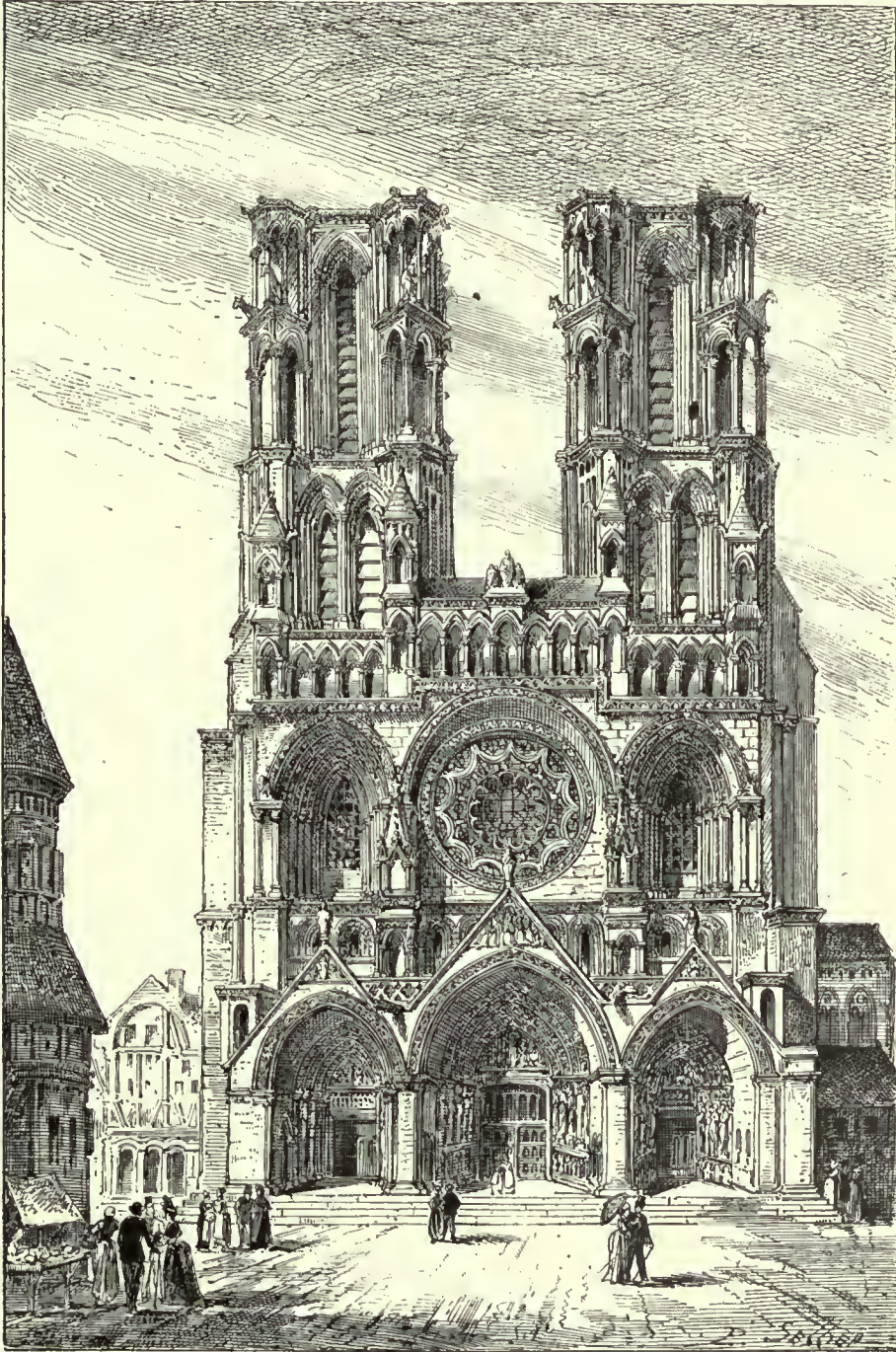
The reasons which suggested it weighed more heavily each day on his awakened conscience, and others came to re-enforce them. Symptoms of discouragement were appearing amongst his disciples. They were bearing up under the present, but the future terrified them. What was to become of them when they were old and infirm? When they should have worn themselves out in work without pay, were they to die of want? After a life of toil and privations, nothing but inevitable starvation awaited them. Blessed de la Salle in vain strove to revive their confidence. He reminded them that God never abandons those who put their trust in Him, and proposed to them the parable of the lilies, that spin not, and that God clothes; of the birds, that reap not, whom God feeds. But the hearts of the Brothers were deaf to his words; even the Gospel could not strengthen their faltering courage.

What made M. de la Salle's counsels and exhortations of so little avail was that he himself preached more by word than by example. One day, at last, the Brothers spoke out, and exposed all their anxieties to him. Confidence, said they, came easy enough to him, because he wanted for nothing. He had a good canonry backed by a good patrimony. Want could never overtake him, and the ruin of the schools would leave him unharmed. But what was to become of them, who had neither property, nor income, nor trade? How were they to go on living?

These reflexions finally decided Blessed de la Salle. He understood that on his side, as on theirs, the foundations of the Institute must be poverty and absolute abandonment to God. Duty seemed now clear to him.

The two functions were manifestly incompatible. He no longer hesitated between the two. The one was easy, honorable and lucrative; the other was an obscure calling, as yet uncertain, without honour, and without profit. He made his choice of the latter, and resolved to resign his canonry. He at once commu-

nicated his resolution to his director. The latter combated all his



Laon. — The cathedral : one of the most ancient and complete types of Gothic architecture of the first period. — Drawn by Sellier.

reasons, blamed his plan, and ordered him to give it up. “Such a

determination," he said, "was most likely the result of a caprice, and an ecclesiastical career was not to be upset in that fashion without long and serious reflexion. If it was the voice of God that was making itself heard in his soul, it would end by triumphing over all human resistance. Meantime, he must wait and consider." This was the voice of wisdom.

Blessed de la Salle submitted humbly; but he could not command his thoughts, and the reasons that had led to his determination pursued him incessantly. He could not make the days be long enough to furnish time for all his duties; he could not, above all, prevent the masters from contrasting bitterly their precarious condition with the state in which he lived. Some months went by like this. He then made another effort to convert his director to his views; but again the latter desired him to wait.

He waited; but, considering it necessary to have recourse to several opinions in so important an affair, he went to Paris to consult Father Barré, whose interior light he had already had occasion to appreciate. Father Barré fully and unreservedly approved of his design. He would have wished it even more perfect, he would have wished it to include absolute detachment from all the things of this world.

"The foxes have their dens," he said to him, "and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of man has not whereon to lay His head." Those are the words of Scripture, and this is what they mean: The foxes are the children of this world who attach themselves to earthly things; the birds of the air are Religious who have their cells for a shelter; and school-masters, whose vocation it is to teach the poor after the example of Jesus Christ, should have nothing more on earth than the Son of man had."

These arguments made a deep impression on Blessed de la Salle; they seemed to him as the voice of God, and even his director at last was conquered by them, and withdrew his opposition.

Notwithstanding the secrecy with which he had surrounded his intention, it eked out, and created an extraordinary sensation in the town. Astonishment soon gave way to blame, and a sort

of league was set on foot to prevent the pious Canon from carrying out his design. His relatives, his friends, his brother Canons, his superiors, all coalesced against him. His family were furious at his giving up a post which reflected honor on them; his brethren were grieved to lose a man whose high qualities they esteemed; his superiors, who had found him a useful auxiliary, regretted his services. No arguments were spared to shake his determination. "He was about," they said, "to renounce duties consecrated by the Church, for a perilous undertaking the success and duration of which nothing guaranteed. Had he not formerly recognized the vocation which called him to be a Canon, and was it no longer possible to please God in that holy state? Moreover, if he was doing good now, it was at the expense of others. By this extraordinary step, he was throwing discredit on his family, and might injure the prospects of his brothers. Was perfection really to be found in this uncommon way, or was not a secret pride leading him to it? He wanted to be singular, to found an order, to wear a habit that would attract attention, and this was a serious temptation where souls more perfect than his had perished."

Blessed de la Salle hesitated before these grave reasons, and before the unanimous opposition of those whom he loved and was accustomed to obey. His soul had to face one of those conflicts which decide the destiny of a life-time. His past rose up before him, and clung to him to hold him back.

He entered into himself; he probed the depths of his heart before God, and found it pure. He weighed the reasons that had guided his resolutions with those that were now put in the balance against them, and found these wanting. He came victorious out of this final struggle, his courage strengthened, and ready to carry out his resolution without further delay.

It was the month of July 1683. Blessed de la Salle set out to Paris to place his resignation in the hands of the Archbishop of Rheims, who was there just then; but he did not see him; the Archbishop had gone back to Rheims. Blessed de la Salle went

to Saint Sulpice, and saw M. de la Barmondière, the parish-priest; he related to him the history of his undertaking, and the pious ecclesiastic was so charmed with it, that he made him promise on the spot to send him two Brothers at once. This was the breaking of the dawn.

On his return to Rheims, Blessed de la Salle went to the Archbishop's house; but he was refused admittance. Powerful influences had been brought to bear on the Archbishop to prevent his accepting the holy priest's resignation; and not knowing how to refuse his consent, the prelate preferred not to see him.

Blessed de la Salle was not to be shaken by this new resistance. He went to see M. Philbert, one of the Superiors of the seminary, and who had great influence with the Archbishop, and laid his scheme before him. M. Philbert entirely approved of it. Then, unwilling to do anything without God's help, Blessed de la Salle went to the Cathedral, prostrated himself before the Blessed Sacrament, and remained several hours absorbed in prayer, imploring God to enlighten him, to strengthen him, and to accomplish the Divine will in him. Two persons saw him come in looking very depressed, and were witnesses of this ardent prayer. "It is M. de la Salle," said one of them; "pray for him, for he has lost his reason." — "You are right," replied the other, who was aware of his sanctity, "but it is the reason of this world that he has lost."

When Blessed de la Salle rose up from his knees, his prayer had been heard. He left the church, went straight to the Archbishop's, and was let in without any difficulty. The prelate asked him if he had sought advice before adopting so grave a determination. M. de la Salle replied that he had consulted M. Philbert. The prelate immediately sent to fetch the latter from choir, and far from belying Blessed de la Salle's words, the worthy Canon declared that he had advised him to give up his canonry to his brother. "He may give it to whomsoever he likes," replied the Archbishop; "I accept his resignation." That evening, he signed the acceptance.

The Archbishop was undoubtedly sorry to lose so good a Canon, and manifested in the presence of several persons the pain it caused him; but he showed no reluctance before Blessed de la Salle, thus sparing him all the distress of answering arguments or regrets. The great obstacle had been removed, and God had smoothed it in order to make the sacrifice easier. The holy priest was so filled with joy, that on returning home, he assembled the Brothers, and sang the *Te Deum* with them in thanksgiving. Like St Bruno of yore, who had also been a Canon of Rheims, and who gave up the office in order to embrace a more perfect life, Blessed de la Salle was free to go whither God called him.

M. de la Salle loved his brother tenderly, that brother who had remained deeply attached to him, and who, when the others had turned from him, had clung the more closely to him. In leaving him his canonry, Blessed de la Salle would simply have paid him a debt of gratitude by providing for his future. But this motive, which would have amply satisfied another, stopped Blessed de la Salle. He feared to yield to nature, and to seek his own advantage while seeming to give it up. His sacrifice, in order to be agreeable to God, he would make absolutely disinterested and purified from all selfish feeling.

He, therefore, gave in his resignation after inscribing upon it the name of one of the humblest and holiest priests in the town, M. Faubert, who was far from dreaming of such an honor. The Archbishop was gone to Paris, and intrigues of all sorts began again to prevent his accepting this proposal of Blessed de la Salle.

Every one meddled in it : the Chapter, grieved at losing their brother-canon, desired to see him replaced by a man at least equally well-born; his family considered it a crying injustice to rob them of the prebend which had been bestowed upon him, and an outrage on the young Abbé de la Salle to exclude him from the inheritance; his friends could not understand his casting away from himself and his brother a position that was so universally coveted, and they condemned as a piece of excentricity a sentiment that was completely at variance with the general opinion.

The Archbishop himself was shaken by all these worldly considerations; the Chapter had written to him; all sorts of persons were circumventing him. Without withdrawing the consent he had so distinctly given, he determined to make one more attempt to persuade Blessed de la Salle to relinquish his purpose. He charged M. Callou, Vicar-general and Superior of the seminary at Rheims, with this delicate mission. The negociator used all his tact and exhausted his eloquence, and then confessed himself not only conquered but converted. Blessed de la Salle's arguments were irresistible, and M. Callou's parting words to him were:— "God forbid that I should advise you to do what so many are trying to induce you to do! Follow where the spirit of God is leading you. This counsel, the very opposite of the one that I came charged to deliver, is the true one. It is the only one you must listen to."

Thankful for this unexpected assent, Blessed de la Salle hastened to communicate it to the Archbishop, who felt he could no longer hesitate; he at once sent to M. Faubert the required provision. The latter took possession of his canonry on the 16th of August 1683, and the future showed that in refusing to resign in favour of his brother, M. de la Salle had obeyed a wise inspiration. Some years later, the Archbishop presented a vacant prebend to Abbé Louis de la Salle, "in order," he said, "to make up to him for his brother's folly."

The Abbé Louis de la Salle afterwards espoused the cause of the Jansenists, and was amongst those of the clergy of Rheims who resisted the Bull. If Blessed de la Salle had placed him in the Chapter, how bitterly he would have reproached himself for having listened to the voice of nature, and thereby put weapons into the hands of his own brother to divide the Church. It is true, Canon Faubert did not quite justify the hopes that were built upon his virtue. He deteriorated under prosperity. So long as he was poor, he was full of fervor. While Blessed de la Salle was near him, he followed his example. He came to live in his house, and founded there, side by side with the seminary for school-masters, a seminary for young ecclesiastics whom he directed with great piety and pru-

dence. But when Blessed de la Salle left Rheims, the establishment fell away with the decay of the zeal that had supported it. No one, of course, could foresee this result. It is in no man's power to penetrate the future dispositions of others, or to fix them in the right way. All that can be done is to act according to one's light, with a pure intention, free from personal interest and natural sympathy, and this is what the holy priest had done.

After separating from his family and leaving the Chapter, Blessed de la Salle thought of leaving the town, and going to Paris. M. Philbert advised him to do this in order that during his absence the angry excitement he had aroused might die out. M. de la Barmondière was impatient for him to arrive in Paris and endow his parish with a most useful establishment. Father Barré was also urging him to come, and assuring him that it is in Paris alone that his Institute could be solidly founded, so as to branch out thence over the kingdom.

Blessed de la Salle was sorely perplexed. He consulted his director, who took a different view of the question from that held by all these venerable persons whom we have mentioned. He said the Institute was as yet too young to be transferred without danger from one place to another, and that the establishment which M. de la Salle would leave behind him at Rheims would quickly fall away when deprived of fostering care. In Paris, he would have to go to great expense, and to overcome obstacles which seemed vague in the distance, but were certain to arise. It was better to wait. The promise he had given the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice was only binding on the condition of being useful and reasonable. If it was to be hurtful, he had much better adjourn its fulfilment.

These were wise reasons, and Blessed de la Salle succumbed to them. He wrote to M. de la Barmondière and to Father Barré, explaining the motives of his decision. He then set to work more earnestly than ever at his own sanctification.

M. de la Salle, in relinquishing his canonry, had given up honours; but he still remained rich. His fortune, a considerable one at that period, amounted to forty thousand francs. He was there-

fore in a very different position from the masters whom he was bearing after him into a career of evangelical perfection; consequently the objections of the latter still held good.

He was resolved to remove this difference, and no longer to continue in the enjoyment of opulence while he was counselling them to embrace poverty; he had begun his breach with the world by separating from his family and giving up his title, he now determined to consummate the sacrifice by giving up his fortune.

He began, as usual, by consulting his confessor. The latter, accustomed as he now was to the extraordinary virtue of his penitent, was surprised into admiration of this heroic renunciation, and, without actually opposing his design, he again advised him to wait. Blessed de la Salle obeyed unhesitatingly. "I will not give it up if you don't wish it," he said; "I will only give up as much as you wish, and if you desire me to keep anything, were it only five pence, I will keep them." A year went by in this way. M. de la Salle's obedience was an admirable proof of the purity of his intentions. His director recognized it, and gave him leave to do what he liked with his patrimony.

Blessed de la Salle had now to struggle with a violent temptation. Since he was bent on giving his fortune to the poor, people said, why not give it to those school-masters whose vocation was imperilled by their poverty? Why not devote it to founding Christian schools? Nothing could be more legitimate, and the merit of his sacrifice would not be lessened, since he would be none the richer for it. This was the advice given him by many persons who passed for being wise, and who re-enforced it by quoting the example of M. Roland. But an interior voice was whispering to Blessed de la Salle that it was better to cast away all human elements in founding his work and to build only on evangelical poverty. Father Barré was of this opinion. He was against all endowments. He feared that security might dry up the source of grace, and that his Religious, feeling themselves provided for, might be less perfectly submissive to the orders of Providence and of their Superiors. He wanted that the spirit of his own Institute should

draw its strength from absolute disinterestedness, from the love of poverty, from the pure desire to labor for the salvation of souls in perfect abandonment to Divine Providence. The moment the community was securely provided for, girls with no vocation would be wanting to enter, simply to get a living. They would dissemble their purpose, make a show of zeal, and there would be no discerning the true vocations from the false. "It is better," said this holy man, "that the schools should only last twelve or fifteen years without funds, and preserve their fervor, than that they should last longer and fall away and become relaxed." And he repeated incessantly to the Sisters: "If you endow, you will sink¹."

Father Barré stood faithful to these maxims to the last. He had given in at Rouen, not to hurt the feelings of the founders of his schools; but he held his own in Paris, and refused money that was offered him to found a house and obtain Letters Patent that would have secured it against want. He would have the Sisters lodged in a house that was lent to them on precarious terms, and he was constantly setting this foundation against Rouen, and declaring that the latter was accursed because it was endowed. "We have *muris* and *ante-murale*," he used to say; "Rouen is the *ante-murale*— outside the holy city; Paris must be the *muris* which represents the purity of the apostolic spirit." What Father Barré had practised so faithfully in his own Institute, he advised Blessed de la Salle to do, and the latter was quite willing to follow the advice. He probably imbibed in the society of the holy friar much of that love of poverty, that detachment from the things of this world, and that perfect abandonment to the will of God of which he was to give such numerous and marvellous examples. For heroic souls like M. de la Salle, the difficulty lies, not in doing their duty, but in knowing it. He did not wish to decide too quickly, for he knew that there is a variety of ways of going to God, and that every Institute has its own rule and its own ideal.

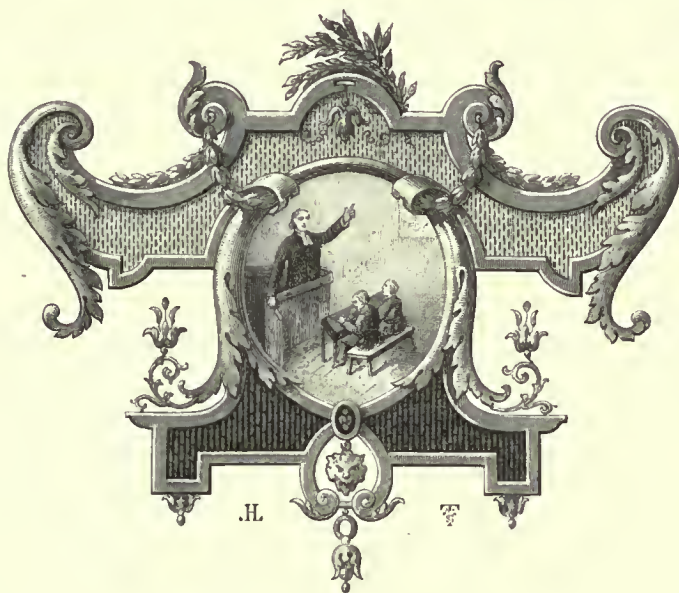
¹ Si vous fondez, vous fondrez.

He had recourse to prayer, his usual resource, and addressed the following humble petition to God :— “ My God, I do not know whether to endow, or not to endow. It is not for me to found communities, nor to know how to establish them. It is for Thee, my God, to know, and to do it in the way that pleases Thee. If Thou endowest them, they will be well endowed; if Thou dost not endow them, they will be without endowment. I pray Thee, O my God, to make known Thy will to me. ”

He decided finally to give all his goods to the poor, and no sooner had he made this resolution, than the occasion presented itself for putting it into execution.

The year 1684 brought a famine which devastated the whole of Champagne, and the town of Rheims was especially stricken. Blessed de la Salle sold all he possessed, and fed the hungry. He proceeded in this crisis with the order that he carried into all he did, and distributed his alms with great discretion and prudence. He divided his patrimony into three parts. The first was for the children; all those who came to the schools received a piece of bread which sufficed, not only for them, but for their families. The second was for the shy poor who were too proud or too timid to leave their homes, and who preferred to suffer rather than beg; Blessed de la Salle visited them himself, and carried them his gifts, doing all in his power to sweeten the offering to them. The third part was given away in the house. Every morning, the poor assembled there, and Blessed de la Salle, or one of the priests who lived with him, addressed a few familiar words to the crowds, and when their souls had been thus nourished, their bodies were fed. Blessed de la Salle generally spoke after his mass. His piety was so ardent, and his charity so tender that he saw in every beggar Jesus Christ clothed in rags, hungry and cold. He would prostrate himself, and then on bended knees offer bread to those poor creatures with the same respect and joy that he would have had in giving alms to Jesus Christ. He considered it an honor to be one of the poor himself, and to receive his pittance with the rest, as an alms.

This distribution began in 1685 and lasted about two years. When it was over, Blessed de la Salle, stripped of everything, and become himself poor with Jesus Christ, resolved to taste poverty in its bitterest extremities. Having occasion to go to Rethel in order to confer with the Duc de Mazarin about establishing a seminary for village school-masters, he travelled on foot, and begged his food all along the road. He had great difficulty in getting a piece of black bread from an old woman, and he ate it with delight. This was truly the workman God was waiting for. Blessed de la Salle was now three and thirty years of age.

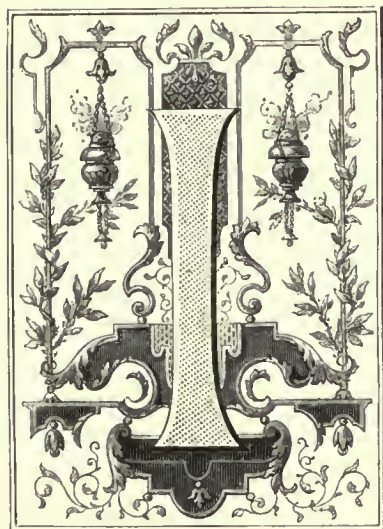




Rheims. — Church of Saint-Remi. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Méaulle. (See more detailed view, p. 176.)

CHAPTER IV.

FOUNDATION.



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It was now four years since M. de la Salle had conceived the idea of renouncing everything in order to give himself exclusively to the Christian schools; it took him from 1682 to 1686 to divest himself wholly of the goods of this world. During that time, his Institute had been gradually emerging from the clouds of his first conception, and it really seemed as if in proportion as Blessed de la Salle advanced in perfection, the Community formed itself on his model and assumed a definite shape. The soul of a founder is as it were the mould of his Institute.

Blessed de la Salle's first care had been to bring his flesh under subjection, in order to fit himself for the mission he had undertaken, and to draw down the Divine blessing upon it. He wore a hair-shirt whose sting exercised his patience, and banished that soft ease which is so often the germ of sin. He wore, besides this, a leathern belt with iron points turned against the flesh. Frequent flagellations with a discipline of iron points still further helped to bring down that rebellious body, which is inevitably our master, if we do not compel it to be our slave. Blessed de la Salle came forth from his chamber, with lacerated flesh, but with a heart joyous, free, ever ready for work and sacrifice.

Born in opulence, he had been brought up with great care, and his health was delicate. His stomach recoiled from coarse food, and had always to be humoured a little. But the holy priest was not going to put up with this, and to be tyrannized by an organ that is made to obey; he resolved to get the better of it, so he sat down to the common table, and was served like the others. At first, nature rebelled; his throat seemed to close against the food. The struggle lasted several days at the cost of painful suffering. Neither the flesh nor the spirit would yield. Blessed de la Salle then condemned himself to a rigorous fast which brought him to long for food with an intense craving. Hunger was the goad that conquered nature, and his stomach accepted whatever food was offered it. The conquest was so complete that the holy man no longer even noticed what he ate. One day, the cook, by mistake, served up a dish of wormwood. On tasting its bitterness, the Brothers thought that they were poisoned, and would eat no more. M. de la Salle alone went on quietly finishing his portion; he perceived nothing.

The Saints do nothing without prayer, and thus it is that they arrive at founding works that endure. The soul that places itself in the presence of God before beginning an undertaking, grasps all its bearings more firmly. Seeing things from a greater height, it embraces a wider scope, and rises above personal considerations that often dim the vision. It sees clearly whether it is animated

in its endeavours by human sentiments, changeful as the interest that prompts them, or by one of those higher motives whose dominion time only confirms. In a word, man feels that he is leaning on God, and then his confidence is strengthened. First, boldness comes to him, then energy, then patience. We do not do the thousandth part of the work we might do. What we want is first the courage to dare, and then to persevere. With these two virtues, we might do all things.

Moreover, prayer, like a magnet, draws down the blessing of God. Events arrange themselves according to the will of those who pray; hearts open and grow sympathetic, and workmen hurry from the four points of the compass without any one calling them. Those who have followed the growth of Christian foundations have infallibly remarked the extraordinary coincidences that have pressed into their service elements the most unlikely. One seems to feel that an unseen hand is putting in motion a variety of forces that we could not control, and we discover unknown allies who, against all hope, bring about the success of the boldest, the rashest, the most vast conceptions.

This blessing does not chain down our liberty; it does not dispense us from efforts, nor destroy the obstacles that spring up on our path; on the contrary, sometimes it seems to create them. As the laborer sows the seed, and then waits until winter has passed and harvest time shall come round, so do the Saints sow in fields that remain a long time barren. They work without making any progress; but their merit is not lost; the angels gather it, and put it safely away in the eternal granaries.

Blessed de la Salle found in constant prayer the secret of those incessant victories which he gained over himself. He prayed by day, he prayed by night, and his life was one long communion with God. Jealous of sleep that interrupted it, he cut short his rest as much as possible. He slept on the ground or on a chair, and interrupted these comfortless slumbers by prolonged prayers; yet the early bell always found him up and dressed, and with a countenance that betrayed no signs of the penances of the night.

At Rheims, he had himself locked into the church of Saint-Remi every Friday evening, and spent the night watching in prayer on



Rheims. — Church of Saint-Remi, where Blessed de la Salle watched every week through the night of Friday.
 — Second exterior view, which shows all the details of the celebrated portal. (See the frisse of p. 173.)
 — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Meaulle.

the tomb of the Saint. The mission that he had undertaken was not perhaps without some resemblance to that of the holy Bishop.

He too was called to teach the doctrine of Christ to barbarians, to that rude and ignorant people that the Revolution was one day to



Rheims. — Interior of the church of Saint-Remi. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Meaule.

crown King, but who was not faithful, like Clovis, to the lessons of the Church.

This life of prayer was never interrupted. Blessed de la Salle never deviated from the rule which bade him seek in God the light

and strength that he needed. The roots of his soul were, so to speak, steeped in prayer, and his external actions were but the visible fruits of a hidden life.

The fire which consumed the holy founder communicated itself to his disciples. Several young men of the town came to him. Some forsook manual labor for the harder work of education; others came from the colleges, and renounced profane studies to apply themselves under his direction to the higher science of salvation. All strove to emulate him in austerity and virtues. The house they occupied, being now too small for his flock, that was increasing daily, he hired another in Rue Neuve, and this one may be considered the cradle of the Institute. The public christened it little La Trappe. The Brothers practised, in truth, all the rigors of M. de Rancé's Rule, but in the midst of a town, with all the noise and din of external life around them, and none of the ineffable consolations of solitude. It was here that Blessed de la Salle began to draw up the outline of his Rule.

He knew that no community can be real or fruitful without a Rule that unites all the different wills of its members, and makes the efforts of all converge to one end. The Rule passes for a slavery in the eyes of the world; but in reality it is an emancipation. It arranges for each one what he has to do, and liberates all from the bondage of deciding about those innumerable little actions of daily life which harass our freedom, or scatter its energies on a thousand unworthy trifles. Wise minds feel so strongly the advantage of such a method, that they adopt it even in the world, and make to themselves a rule to which they generally remain faithful.

But the prudent founder did not choose that the Rule should be his own work. He was too experienced and too humble. He would only draw up his Rule after long and careful reflexion, prayer still longer, and under the dictation, as it were, of the Holy Ghost. His disciples, whose conduct it was to govern, were also to have their share in the writing of it. They would be all the more docile to its prescriptions, if they had recognized its wisdom beforehand.

He therefore gathered twelve of them together, to discuss these important questions. They began their deliberations by a retreat, in order to draw down the Divine blessing and light on the resolutions they were about to adopt. This meeting is looked upon as the first general assembly that was held in the Institute. The retreat opened on the 10th of May, which happened to be the eve of the Ascension, in 1684. Blessed de la Salle made known the object of it:— “It was necessary,” he said, “that the masters, hitherto bound together by frail ties, should now become a community endowed with a life of its own, and through every part of which the Christian sap should flow. Rules were necessary for this purpose; but, before being written, they should be observed. Habit would thus render the burden lighter, and experience would retrench whatever might be exaggerated in it. By this wise conduct, you will find nothing but what is already familiar to you in the new rules; your heart will recognize its own work in the book that is going to be compiled, and its laws will appear mild to you because you will have been yourselves the law-makers. You have now reached the point to which I wanted to lead you. Having witnessed your fervor and your piety, I wish to take steps with you to fix your state, to confirm your dispositions, to cement your union, and to begin the edifice of which you are the first stones.”

The retreat lasted till the feast of the Blessed Trinity. The masters then discussed the various points of the Rule they were about to adopt. Each one had a right to speak out freely, without restraint, and to express his own feelings and opinions. The wise founder, who presided over these deliberations, rectified any views that struck him as mistaken; but he never imposed his own will; he generally addressed himself to God to implore His goodness to enlighten the rebel minds and the darkened hearts.

And yet this assembly did not bring forth a Rule, properly so called. The hour had not struck for it. But it was necessary to come to an agreement on the majority of points that constitute life in common, on the question of clothing and food, on the name to be taken

by each, on the distribution of the day, and on the character of the bond which was to bind each master to the work he had undertaken. In a word, it was not the Rule, but the materials for the Rule that were about to be prepared. They decided, consequently, to adjourn the drawing up of the statutes. The second point discussed was the kind of diet to be adopted. It was to be substantial but frugal. The Brothers were workmen employed in a hard task: they ought not to practice more abstinence than what the Church imposes on all; but they were also poor workmen, and should, therefore, banish from their table everything like superfluity. The body should have what was necessary; nothing more. Fowl and dainty dishes were forbidden. On fasting days, they were to content themselves with vegetables and herbs cooked without any flavoring. Fish was excluded as a luxury, except of the kind which the poor themselves used. The quantity was measured with a view to restoring strength without heaviness to the body, or any loss of activity to the soul.

The question of costume was next discussed. A great many reasons necessitate a common costume in a religious community. The habit is a symbol; it should remind the wearer of the calling he has embraced, and be to him a kind of epitome of the Rule to which he is subjected. In casting aside the raiment of this world, the Religious renounces all the frivolities it represents, and a thousand tiresome remembrances depart from the soul together with the costume that suggested them. In entering on a new life, one adopts a new costume.

The habit is, moreover, a rallying sign which enables the members of the same family to recognize one another without ever having met, and so come mutually to each other's aid. They proclaim thus to the world to what master they belong, and avoid mistakes. It is not that they seek after honors or respect; the livery of Christ is not wont to win these; but they do not wish to be treated as being of this world when they have ceased to belong to it. The habit is also a protection against sin; it raises a barrier between the world and the Religious. A certain sense of honor,

which still lives in every soul, obliges him who wears the religious habit to respect it, and to shrink from dishonoring it. Temptation will generally stand aside from his path. The founders of orders are too humble to despise this support to the virtue of their disciples. Lastly, Religious are poor, and a uniform costume is an economy. It affords no opportunity for variety of stuff or diversity of fashion.

The habit should answer to the profession. The soldier has his armour, the Monk ought to have his; for both have a battle to fight. The soldier is exposed to bullets and sword-thrusts and girds himself with steel. The Religious has to fight against the assaults of the flesh; he arms himself with the livery of poverty, humility and penance.

This habit appears odd, yet it has not the ridiculous character of many which are adopted by fashion, and which look out of date the moment that the caprice which chose them has discarded them. Religious costumes are more conformed to the law of æsthetics. They answer their purpose, which is to cover and to clothe. They are of plain tissue and sombre aspect. Their beauty does not depend on colour or material, and it seems, on the contrary, as if the coarseness of the stuff only lent greater amplex to their folds. Art loves to reproduce them, and it does so without the minute labor that is often required in making the best of worldly garments.

The very unchangeableness of the religious habit constitutes a charm. Time goes by and years pass over and over without its growing old. Belonging to no period, it always remains young, and thus partakes of one of the attributes of eternity. The masters, therefore, reflected long over the costume they were to adopt. Hitherto, they had gone on wearing the clothes they had brought with them, merely adding the little collar; but the time seemed now to have come for them to distinguish themselves from seculars. They could not, however, decide upon anything, so they left the matter to the wisdom of their founder, who only settled the question some months later.

Winter had come, and the mayor advised him to give his disciples a capote, then generally worn in Champagne; it was a large cloak with hanging sleeves that was a protection against the wind, the rain and the cold. Blessed de la Salle thought this cloak both simple and commodious, and he adopted it. He had it made long in common black stuff, and it became the distinctive habit of his Religious. Under it, they wore the soutane, without a belt, fastened with iron hooks. Thick shoes with double soles, and a broad-brimmed hat completed their costume.

Once the habit was adopted, the holy priest would never give it up. He had even to withstand strong opposition on the point, and his resistance was the cause, later on, of a veritable persecution against his rising Institute. And yet he was right. The founder of an order should, before deciding a point, reflect well, and listen to advice; but when he has made up his mind, he should never let the question be mooted again, nor yield to every passing opinion. Man's mind is changeable, and he who would fain conciliate everybody would never decide anything. If Blessed de la Salle had consented to change once the form of garment he had chosen, a thousand other reasons, equally serious, would have followed, and new changes should have been adopted, until the costume would have been at the mercy of the caprice of fashion.

The habit chosen by Blessed de la Salle drew great ridicule on him. The world is always ready to laugh at anything new. When the Brothers appeared in the streets clothed in their long soutane of coarse stuff, their wide cloak, their broad-brimmed hat, and their heavy shoes, they were the butt for all kinds of jokes.

People ran out to stare at them as they passed, and jeered at them with the most unseemly remarks. They accepted these humiliations for Jesus Christ's sake, and clung to their costume, which is now respected all over the world.

It was at this same period that the masters agreed to take the name of Brothers of the Christian Schools, which they still bear, and which is the most beautiful and most typical of names.

But the most difficult question of all that had to be settled was that of the vows. Should they make vows, and what vows, and for how long?

The new Brothers had seen their predecessors lose heart at the first obstacles, and leave the new-born community under pretext that no barrier withheld them. Made fearful by this example, and feeling themselves full of fervor, they desired to bind themselves for life, and make perpetual vows. They were resolved in the bottom of their heart. Since they had the pain of the sacrifice, they would have at least the merit of the promise. What would the engagement add to the life they were already leading? Poverty? They had tasted all the sweetness of it during the two years they had passed through. Chastity? The greater number of them had for many years been aspiring to the priesthood or the monastic state, and they had given up all idea of marriage. Obedience? They felt every day how light is the yoke of Christian authority to a soul that has cast off the burden of its own will. There was, therefore, nothing to prevent them from pronouncing with their lips the engagements they had long since made in their hearts, and whose extent they had fully measured.

Nevertheless, Blessed de la Salle did not yet allow them to take imprudent vows which might have lured their souls to perdition. He knew human nature too well not to dread its allurements. Although he was satisfied with his disciples, he pointed out to them the necessity of mistrusting their own strength, of proving their virtue, and of learning in time to distinguish between those desires which float on the surface of the soul, and those which rise from its depths. It would be more perfect in them to wait upon grace than to run before it, and to show themselves faithful in small things in order to merit the grace to be faithful in great duties. It was, consequently, decided that they should only take the vow of obedience and of stability in the Society for three years, but that this vow should be renewed every year.

The ceremony took place on the feast of Holy Trinity. Blessed de la Salle himself drew up the form of the vow. He

signed it; all the others copied it and pronounced it after him. Events showed how wise he had been in postponing the perpetual vows. Out of the twelve Brothers who pledged themselves, only eight presented themselves at the renovation of vows, a year later. They continued to renew the vow of three years, until 1694, when the vows took another form.

The twelve Brothers had fixed their own engagement. It was now necessary to determine the nature of the bond that should be imposed on the other members of the community, or those who, being younger and more liable to change, could not be bound for a period, or left altogether free. It was decided they should only be bound by the vow of obedience for one year; they could renew it every year until their vocation was confirmed.

M. de la Salle occupied with his disciples the house they had hired in Rue Neuve; M. Faubert, the Canon, who had succeeded him, asked leave to live with him. Following his example, he had founded a community of students whom he was preparing for the priesthood; but the presence in one house of young men who were following different careers was open to certain objections— so Blessed de la Salle preferred to give up the house altogether to M. Faubert, and go elsewhere. The number of Brothers went on increasing, however, and soon the new abode was too small; at the beginning of the year 1685 the holy founder was obliged to go back to his old house, which M. Faubert in turn gave up to him. Confidence in God— this was the sentiment that constantly guided Blessed de la Salle in all his foundations. “ Our Brothers,” he repeated, “ only keep up so long as they are poor; they will lose the spirit of their vocation the moment they take to working to earn the commodities of life.” He cultivated this virtue in himself, and he recommended it unceasingly to his disciples.

Not only did he distribute all his goods to the poor, but he chose henceforth to be fed, clothed and lodged like a poor priest; soutane, hat, shoes, he selected the worst and the shabbiest of everything. His soutane was always clean, but of the coarsest stuff,





thread-bare, and covered with patches; so long as it could be made to hold together by mending, he would not have it changed, so that when he finally put it away, it was impossible to make any use of it. Two robbers stopped him once on the high way, and stripped him; but when they examined his clothes they gave them back to him. They were ashamed to carry off such booty.

He possessed nothing but his breviary, the New Testament, an Imitation of Christ, his crucifix, and his rosary; and when some one upbraided him with this excessive poverty, he replied :— “ What do you mean? Is one not very rich with the holy Gospels to draw the treasures of eternal life from whenever one wishes? Was not this the whole wealth of the solitaries of the desert, and the mine from which they drew their treasury of virtues? ”

He always chose the smallest room in the house; he often occupied the common dormitory, or else retired into some corner where only one person could fit. At Rheims, it was a narrow cell, a sort of dovecot, situated at the top of the house; at Saint-Yon, it was a half underground room, close to the stables, and pervaded with the smell of them.

His greatest desire was to die at the hospital, and in 1690, in a serious illness that attacked him, he implored the Brothers to carry him there.

He never ceased commending to his disciples this virtue of poverty, so loved of the Hermits of the desert and the Prophets. Without tolerating dirt or untidiness which spring from vanity or sloth, he severely blamed all complaint or self-seeking. A Brother having written to expose to him the poverty of the house, the lover of poverty made answer :— “ You are poor. Our Lord was poor, although he might have been rich. You must imitate this Divine model. It looks as if you expected to want for nothing. Who would not be poor on those terms? Even the rich would be content to put up with such poverty. Remember, I pray you, that you did not come into the community to have your ease, but to embrace the state of poverty with all its inconveniences. You are

poor, you say; well then, you never had so many opportunities of practising virtue. »

The vow which Blessed de la Salle found it hardest to practice was obedience. He was the superior. What chance was there that a priest, a Doctor of Divinity, should ever have to obey poor laymen so far beneath him both intellectually and socially? And yet, all his life he was tending to this. Soon after taking his vows, he thought of resigning his office of Superior; he pursued this purpose for years, and succeeded in accomplishing it before his death. In truth, his whole life had been a long act of obedience to the Rule as to all the duties imposed upon him by the direction of the Institute. The Superior of a religious order may, while exercising command, practice this vow of obedience in all its perfection, for he has above him God and his Rule.

The pious founder had submitted with docility to that of the Brothers. A master being wanted in the school of Saint Jacques, M. de la Salle immediately took his place; he put on the soutane with the iron hooks and the mantle with the large sleeves, and went twice a day to the school and taught the class. He took the children to mass, and brought them back, and spent the day instructing them. This conduct, criticized in the Brothers, was considered altogether excentric and degrading in a Doctor of the Faculty, a Canon of the cathedral. His friends and relatives did not spare him. Mortified by his manner of life, they took sides with his adversaries, and set down his behaviour to pride and to madness.

M. Nyel had declined to enter the community of Blessed de la Salle. He had not the vocation, and his volatile nature would have been incapable of keeping steady to it. His mission was to come and go on every side, clearing the way, preparing minds, and laying the first stones of those schools that M. de la Salle was to build.

He was at Laon now, where he had founded a school, of which he had several times entreated Blessed de la Salle to take the management, but the latter had always refused. M. Nyel at last

resolved to force him into consenting. He knew that if he went away, the holy man would take up his work and continue his functions; so he took himself off to Rouen, where the general hospital granted him, in consideration of his long services, the title of Superintendant of Poor Schools.

Blessed de la Salle found himself in a most embarrassing position. The parish-priest of Saint Pierre of Laon, who was a friend of his, hastened to Rheims, and made him understand that he could not let a flourishing school fall to pieces; if he did not come to the rescue, the masters would lose heart and the children would cease to be instructed. The servant of God could never resist such arguments as these. He went off at once and, moreover, he added to the direction of the Rheims schools those of the schools founded in the neighboring towns. He thus came to have a large congregation to manage.

These multifarious occupations in no way diminished his love of solitude and retirement. He seized every opportunity of flying from the world, and being alone with God in whose presence he found the wisdom and strength he needed. He had reserved to himself at the top of the house, a lowly little room that no one knew of, and there he used to hide himself, only leaving it when duty commanded him. But these imperious calls left him little leisure. Besides the cares of governing his community, he had countless visits to receive. The growing reputation of his holiness drew to him crowds of people who wanted his advice, and whom he could not refuse to receive. His Brethren of the Chapter were curious to see for themselves whether all they heard about his humility and his mortification was true. The Abbé of Saint Thierry, of the order of St Benedict, and many others, came with certain prejudices in their minds against the singularity of his mode of life, but all went away deeply edified by his conversation. He resisted these interruptions as far as possible, and wrestled, as it were, with God to remain with him in the silence of prayer and contemplation.

In 1686, he made a retreat in the solitude of Mount Carmel,

near Louviers, some leagues from Rouen. He took his precautions not to be disturbed, and did not leave his address. He placed a Brother at the head of the house of Rheims with orders to provide for all that was needful, and in the event of any difficulty arising, to write to a Nun at Rouen who would forward any necessary letters.

But hardly had the holy man departed, than the two Brothers who were directing the school at Laon fell dangerously ill, and the Brother at Rheims only arrived in time to receive their last sigh. He wrote at once to Blessed de la Salle, who hastened his return within three days.

Painful as this event was to him, it did not disturb him, for he always submitted to the will of God uncomplainingly. Having nobody to put at the head of the Laon school, he broke it up, declared the holidays begun, and sent the children home for two months. Then, he set out at once for Rheims with the Brother who had sent for him. They travelled part of the night on foot without taking a moment's rest. A little before midnight, the holy priest consented to swallow a glass of wine and a crust of bread in a suburb about four leagues from Rheims; then, they started anew on their way. On arriving at Rheims, Blessed de la Salle sent the Brother to lie down, while he himself went to prepare for his mass by meditation. Prayer was his rest.

But all this while, death was making havoc in the little flock. From 1681 to 1688 seven Brothers died, all under thirty years of age. The most perfect, the ones who were ripe for heaven, were the first to go.

Brother John Francis, who had given up an important appointment to enter the community, lived about eighteen months, and died in 1684. He had been noted for his great piety, which did not forsake him during his last painful illness. Even in the ravings of delirium he gave utterance to the sentiments that filled his soul, and died in a sort of ecstasy, pronouncing joyfully the name of God.

Brother Bourlette went soon after him. He also was from

Rheims, and of easy circumstances. His parents, whose idol he was, surrounded him with every sort of care, and it was this which made him turn away from the paternal house. He wanted a more bracing life and a more assured object. The hard trials that Blessed de la Salle had to undergo attracted him, and he knocked so persistently at the door that the holy man could no longer refuse to admit him. His parents were deeply afflicted by this determination of their son, and left nothing undone to shake it; but he stood faithful.

He was sent to Rethel, where he overworked himself, in spite of all that could be said to hold him back; nothing could restrain his ardor. His colleague having fallen ill, he insisted on keeping the two classes. "I have the right foot in one school-room," he said, "and the left in the other, my mind with our sick Brother and my heart in heaven." He was making haste to gather in his harvest of merits, as if he had a presentiment that the time would be short. Sickness took him, indeed, suddenly as it did his fellow-brother, and carried him off also in a few days. He died in 1686. The whole town mourned him.

The following year, the community lost Brother Maurice, also a man of singular piety. Two of the Brothers in the Community were stricken with the same disease, consumption. The doctor advised them to leave the community, giving them reason to hope that out of it they could be cured efficaciously. Brother Maurice refused to give up his vocation. He died on the 1st of May 1687, in his twenty-second year, full of resignation and fervor. The other Brother followed the advice of the doctor, but without avail, for he died three months later, and not without regret for having failed in perseverance.

Blessed de la Salle took the tenderest care of all his sick disciples, and neglected no means of prolonging their lives; but it is not in man's power to postpone the hour marked by Providence for our departure from this world. M. de la Salle, moreover, had no anxiety concerning the salvation of his disciples; he knew the purity of their souls, and he knew how worthy they were of the eternal

reward. Their death alone would have reassured him. The parish-priest who gave them Extreme Unction said :— “Never did I see any one, even at the age of eighty-four, die with such courage and resignation.”

In 1683, the holy priest heard of another death, which, though it did not occur in the community, deprived it of a powerful protector and devoted friend. Father Barré, after a life spent in holy works, gave up his beautiful soul to God full of merits. We know the share he had in the foundation of the Christian schools, and the valuable advice he often gave to M. de la Salle. The latter did not forget this, as we shall see in the course of his future life.

The spectacle of these frequent deaths so near him inspired Blessed de la Salle with the desire to prepare himself, and to keep his soul continually in the presence of God. He wished to resign the position he held amongst his disciples, and to confide the government to one of them, so as to be able to bury himself more completely in obscurity and obedience. His humility was so profound that it deceived him. He fancied he was not wanted, and that he could serve the Brothers better in praying for them than in governing them. He accordingly gathered them together, and laid his wishes before them with such forcible unction and wisdom, that he convinced them and made them believe it was essential to relieve him of the burden of authority. He had enough to do, he said, in confessing them and directing their souls, and the administration of the Institute disturbed him in this important duty; there were, moreover, amongst the Brothers many who were capable of filling his office, and since he must inevitably give them a successor, it had much better be during his life-time, when the new Superior might benefit by his experience and have recourse to his advice. Was it not, in fact, better that the Superior of the Brothers should be one of themselves, a man of their own condition, and distinguished from them only by his office?

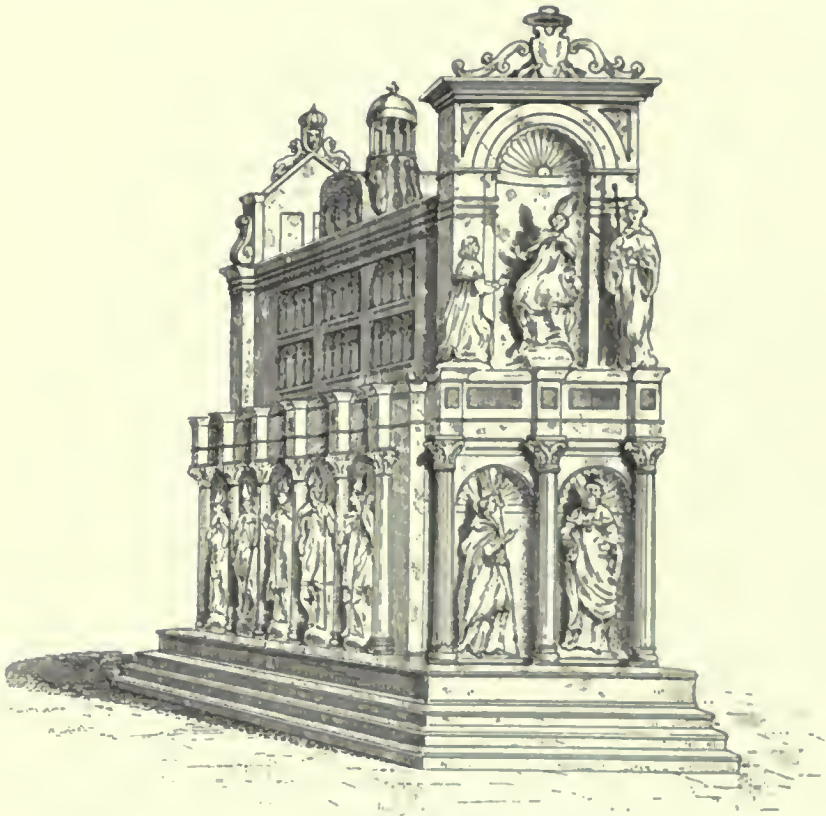
These arguments prevailed with the Brothers, and, grieved as they were to be deprived of an authority whose wisdom they had

learned so fully to appreciate, they consented to their father's resignation, and proceeded at once to a new election. Brother Henri L'Heureux was chosen. He was the most competent. He was intelligent, pious, and if Blessed de la Salle had had the choice, it would have fallen upon him. But the poor Brother recoiled with terror from the new duties imposed upon him. He accepted them out of obedience; but it seemed to him that the house had been turned upside down when he found that he had to command him who was his Superior in every way, and whose voice he had ever obeyed with joy. M. de la Salle, however, by his humility and submission, made the task easy to him. He became instantly the most obedient of Brothers, and the most regular of novices. Assiduous at all the exercises, never dreaming of taking advantage of his former authority to obtain any dispensation, he seemed the last and the lowest of all. Morning and evening, he made the public accusation of defects. For the least omission, he went humbly on his knees, and confessed aloud what he considered he had done wrong, and begged for a penance. He would not have dared to receive a visitor, nor to open his lips before a stranger, without permission. Not only did he obey the Superior, but he looked upon every Brother who held any office as the depositary of authority, and carried out his least injunctions with punctual docility. The most repugnant tasks did not deter him; his humility anticipated them. He asked as a favor to sweep away the dirt of the house, and he was often to be seen peeling vegetables, like St Bonaventure, and washing up the dishes under the orders of the Brother cook. Nothing could stop him from seeking these lowly offices, and Providence allowed it in order that his example might profit to his numerous family, and that in future all superiors, school-masters, Brothers and novices, should find a model in him.

The very excess of his humility betrayed him. It had been agreed that, in order to avoid public comment, the change in the community should not be mentioned. One day, some notabilities having come to see M. de la Salle, he said he could not speak to



them without permission from his Superior, which he went at once to solicit. This surprised them so much that they could not conceal their amazement and disapproval. The incident was noised about the town and gave rise to a kind of scandal. People said it was not fitting for a Priest, a Doctor of Divinity, a former Canon, to be under the orders of a simple school-master, that the natural

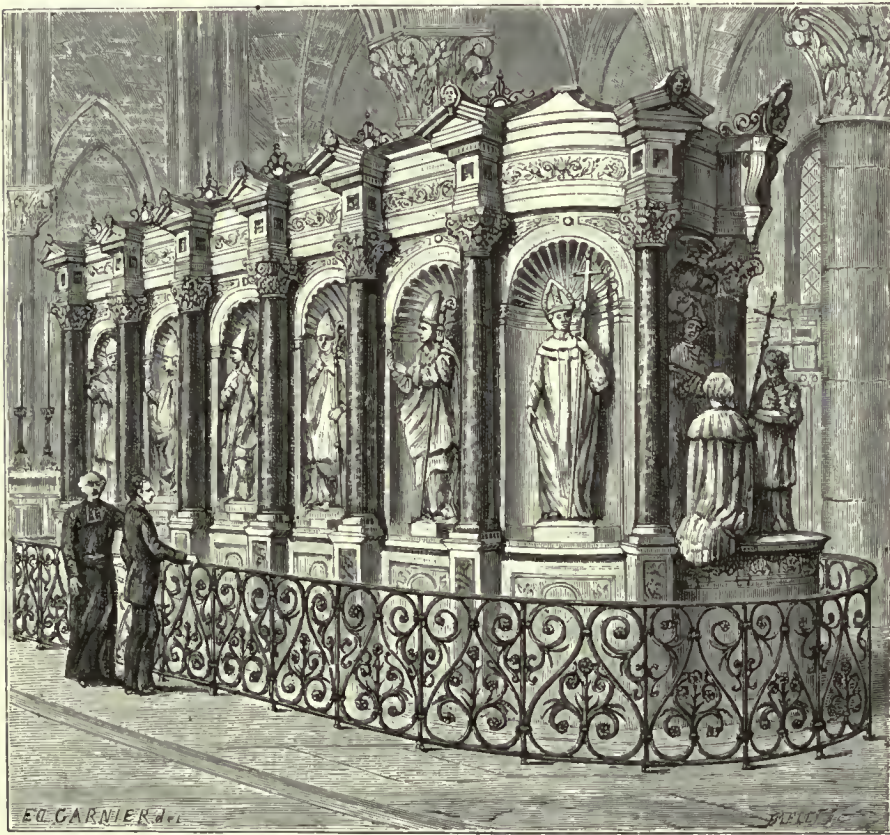


Rheims. — Tomb of St Remi, by which Blessed de la Salle watched : its appearance as it was during his life-time. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier.

order of things was reversed, and that the dignity of the ecclesiastical state was lowered by it. Everybody had something to say about it, until at last the news came to the palace of the Archbishop. The Vicars-general were of the opinion of everybody outside; they thought the position was abnormal, and went straight off to the little Community to replace M. de la Salle at the head of it, and Brother L'Heureux under his orders.

The latter was delighted to be relieved of a function which had

been a heavy burden to him, and the servant of God resumed it without murmuring, though not without regret. He began at once to consider in what way he could continue to satisfy his love of obscurity. Meantime, he exercised command as faithfully as he had practised obedience. He was by turns the most submissive of disciples, the firmest of masters, always humble.



Rheims. — Tomb of St Remi: its present condition. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Farlet.

This humility had only too many opportunities of manifesting itself. The children were hard to manage and little used to discipline; it was necessary to train them, and consequently to chastise them. The Brothers, as yet inexperienced in the art of directing schools, yielded sometimes to a very pardonable impatience, and went rather too far. The parents, indignant, took the side of their children, and came to reproach Blessed de la Salle with the faults of his disciples which they exaggerated purposely. These com-

plaints brought crowds daily to the doors of the house, and he could not show himself without being assailed with abusive epithets. Sometimes even, the mob followed him in the streets, hissing and hooting after him.

Despite of all these trials, the great work of Blessed de la Salle was spreading and perfecting itself. One day, a boy of fifteen asked to be admitted to the Brotherhood. The founder did not habitually receive such young candidates; he feared their not being strong enough to bear the rigors of the Rule, and to grant them dispensations would be a source of disorder in the Community. The boy, however, seemed animated with such good dispositions, that Blessed de la Salle made up his mind to receive him. Almost immediately, three other young fellows of the same age came knocking at the door, soliciting the same favor. The holy priest saw in this incident an indication of Providence. He questioned the lads, and having assured himself of their excellent dispositions, he received them, and conceived at once the idea of forming a little Community apart from the larger one, for which it should be a preparation. He established it in a house separated from the principal one, and only communicating with it by a door. Dormitories, refectory, class-rooms, everything was distinct. The kitchen alone was in common, and from here the meals were carried to the two communities who ate separately.

M. de la Salle placed the young aspirants under the guidance of an elderly and experienced Brother, and gave them a Rule which was a modification of the Statutes. Every day, they recited the little Office of the Blessed Virgin and the rosary. Twice a day, they had the examination of conscience, spiritual reading and prayer; they went to Communion generally on Sundays.

The rest of their time went in completing their studies. They learnt to read, write and cypher. Their exercises were at fixed hours; in a word, they followed a rule of life very similar to that which is now used in noviciates.

Blessed de la Salle loved to come amongst these young students to relax from the strain and fatigue of heavier duties, and de-

lighted in initiating their innocent souls into the secrets of perfection. He gave them as a model the Child Jesus, whose image he placed in their oratory. On Christmas day, he was the first to consecrate himself to the Divine Infant, and he did so with as much fervor and piety as if he had held him in his arms. The young novices followed. The life they led had transformed them. They had lost the giddiness and petulance of youth, and assumed an air of gravity and discretion which struck all beholders. They did not wear the habit. The collar and cropped hair were their only external signs of resemblance with the Brothers, and yet they had the air of professed Religious. Occasionally, Blessed de la Salle called one of them, whose vocation seemed to him certain, to teach in the schools with the Brothers.

This community flourished. It had begun with four members, and at the end of a few months it reckoned twelve. It had proved efficacious in training masters. It was a veritable novitiate. It held on at Rheims for two years after Blessed de la Salle's departure; but, deprived of his direction, it grew relaxed; the young men went off, one after another, and no new comers replaced them. The holy founder was obliged to bring to Paris the few who remained.

Towards the same period, that is to say in 1686, several village pastors from the neighborhood of Rheims, having heard of the Christian schools and their good results, entreated Blessed de la Salle to send them masters. The country schools were the most neglected of all. The perspective of the lowly and impoverished life that awaited them kept aloof such teachers as were really competent, and the school was handed over to the first comer. The pastors, urged by the Church to organize primary education in the parishes, did not know where to turn for school-masters.

M. de la Salle could not satisfy them; he had not masters enough; besides this, he had made a rule of never exposing his disciples to the dangers of solitude; consequently, he always sent two together to every school; and these poor villages could not support two Brothers. The pastors, getting no help from that quarter, de-

terminated to find masters themselves, and send them to Blessed de la Salle to be educated. They recruited in their parishes young men full of good will and ready to devote themselves to this arduous career, and they sent them off to M. de la Salle, begging him to train them on the model of the masters at Rheims who were so useful and valuable.

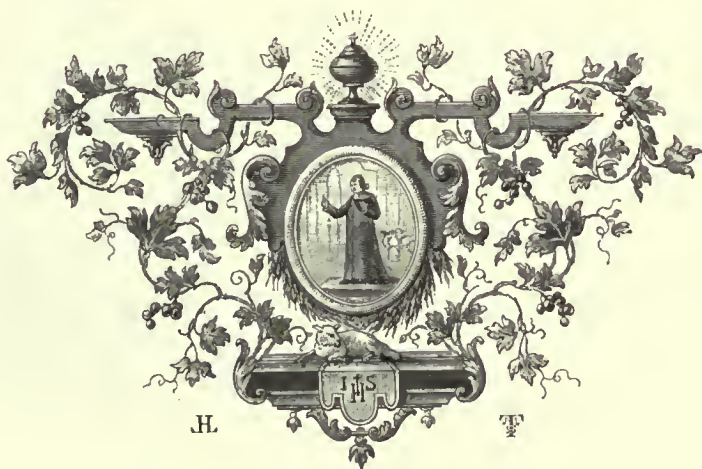
The holy priest welcomed the newcomers, and did not shrink from the extra burden of labor and expense they entailed, for they brought nothing themselves, and the pastors were too poor to contribute anything, so the whole weight fell upon M. de la Salle. He settled them in a separate wing of the building, and formed them into a new community which soon numbered five and twenty members, and was placed under the care of an experienced Brother. A perfect spirit of union reigned amongst these young men, who had their exercises and regulations quite apart. They were formed to piety, but not bound to the rigors of religious life, for they were laymen, and were to remain laymen. They kept their secular dress, having merely, like the novices, the turned-down collar, and close cut hair. They learned reading and writing, and, as they would be expected to chaunt at the parish services, they were taught plain chaunt. When they were sufficiently well instructed, they went back to their village, and taught in the school. They were subjects of edification for the whole parish, precious auxiliaries for the pastors, and devoted masters for the children to whom they taught the rudiments of knowledge and the practice of Christian life.

This Community, which was called the Seminary of schoolmasters for the country, was the first model of the Normal Schools. The genius of Blessed de la Salle had anticipated the civil law of France by more than a century. He had embraced with one glance the whole system of primary education, and had established both religious and lay teachers at the same time, reserving the former for the towns, where they lived in community and could excite one another to the perfection of their calling, and sending the others into the country. For these latter, life in com-

munity was not necessary, for their profession was less arduous, and it was enough for them to have passed a certain time with the Brothers, and been disciplined by their Rule, and formed to holiness by their example.

It was not chance that led Blessed de la Salle to found successively these various establishments that were needed for children. It is true, he let himself be led by circumstances which to him indicated the will of God; but, once his mind was made up, he kept to his plan with unwearying perseverance. The Seminary of school-masters for the country, which he founded at Rheims, flourished so long as he remained there, but it could not survive his departure, and died out.

Blessed de la Salle had, therefore, at Rheims three communities which formed together a sort of complete University for primary education: these were the Community of the Brothers, that of the Novices, and that of the school-masters. They comprised about fifty persons that he had to govern, to instruct and to support. Now M. de la Salle had no means whatever. He began this foundation by giving his patrimony to the poor, reserving nothing either for himself or his disciples. And yet so long as he was at Rheims, they wanted for nothing. The blessing of God was upon him.





The old church of Saint Sulpice. — Drawn by Édouard Garuier, from a print of the period; engraved by Trichon.

CHAPTER V.

THE SULPICIAN SCHOOLS.



AND now, the Institute of the Brothers is founded. All the establishments in which Blessed de la Salle is to interest himself later on, exist at Rheims— at least in the bud. The principal points of the Rule are fixed and put on trial. The work must now be transferred to a wider sphere, just as a plant, whose vigorous growth can no longer be compressed within the earthen vase where it first sprouted up, must be transplanted into the ground where it will have room to put forth its roots and extend its branches unimpeded. At Rheims, the Community of the Brothers must have remained a diocesan institution, and

would have yielded but scant fruit, whereas it was destined to reform the Christian education of the children of the people all over the world.

Neither could it have been thoroughly tried at Rheims. The virtue of Blessed de la Salle had found it easy to bring over the little local hostilities with which Providence surrounded the rising work, like those little thorns by means of which an intelligent laborer protects a delicate flower when it begins to blossom.

In order that neither pride, nor vanity, nor self-indulgence should tarnish or corrupt the generous desire which had prompted him to devote himself to children, he had had to bear with the opposition of his family, the contempt of his Brethren, the rebuffs of his superiors, the jeers and outrages of the crowd. But his patience, his charity and his piety soon disarmed his adversaries.

He was destined to undergo other trials.

The soul of the Saints must be beaten down by contradiction, by envy, by the hatred of men; they must be purified in the fire of suffering. They are made strong by those very blows which break to pieces less courageous wills. Iron is tempered where glass is shattered. Straw is burnt up by the fire from which gold comes forth purer and more brilliant.

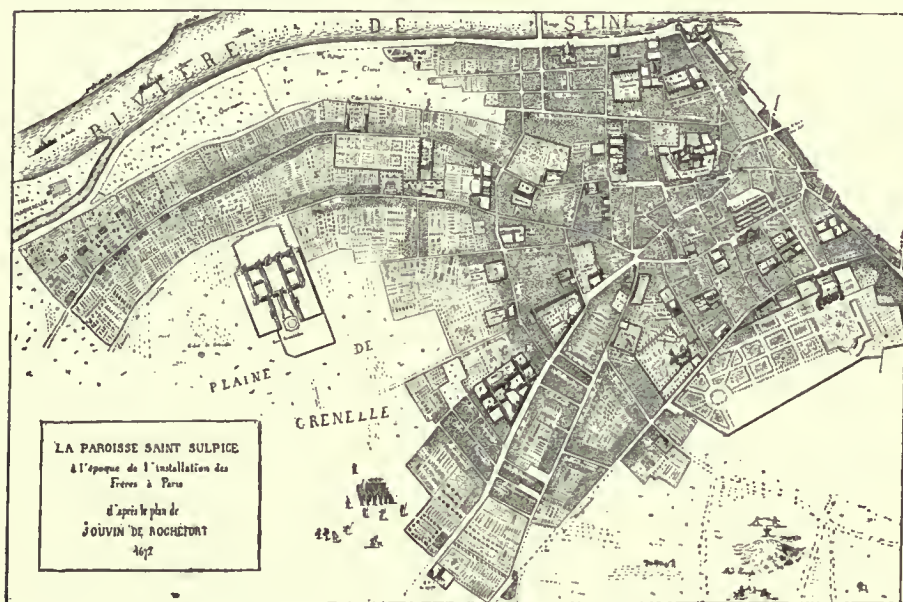
It was well, moreover, that Blessed de la Salle should be withdrawn from that centre to which his life was attached by so many human links— his family, his friends, the memories of his childhood. These were means that Providence had no need of, leading-strings which became hindrances, and, after having assisted his first steps, prevented him from taking his flight unimpeded. He must needs be cast forth alone, unknown in a strange world, carrying his work with him, and having only God to lean on.

Paris was the place destined to be his abode during this new phase of his existence. There, alone, he could be quite lost in the crowd, and given up to his enemies, without being able to turn to his past for protection. From this centre only could his Institute, if it stood out against all contradiction, branch forth all over the world.

Blessed de la Salle had long been anxious to settle in Paris.

Father Barré had frequently advised him to do so, and he had himself promised M. de la Barmondière, parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, to come and found a school in his parish.

But he was the servant of Providence before everything else, and never sought to anticipate God's hour. He would not leave Rheims without being authorized by his superiors to do so, nor



Plan of the parish of Saint-Sulpice in 1672. — Drawn by Legrand.

would he go to Paris without being called thither. M^r Letellier, on hearing of his intention, first endeavoured to hold him back; we cling most to the treasure we are about to lose. The Archbishop saw the advantage that M. de la Salle would be to the diocese, if he could persuade him to settle down there, and to this end he made him the most seductive offers. He promised to defray all the expenses of the community, and to give him the means of extending it throughout the diocese. He named only one condition; the holy man was not to found any schools beyond it.

Blessed de la Salle would not accept these terms. He had distributed his fortune to the poor, and had kept nothing for

himself; he was not to be tempted by other people's money. His sole ambition was to establish his Institute solidly, and to ensure its development. He laid his reasons before the Archbishop, and the latter appreciated them. He was not a man to put his own interests above those of the whole Church, and he left Blessed de la Salle free to follow his inspirations.

At this period, the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, remembering the promise which had been made to him, begged Blessed de la Salle to come to Paris and fulfil it. The parish of Saint-Sulpice was, in truth, ready to receive him.

The faubourg Saint-Germain had long been one of the most ill-famed quarters of Paris. It was not that it lacked religious establishments; it was filled with them. The parish of Saint Sulpice, more extensive but less populous than it is now, was bounded, on the east, by the Rue des Fossés-Monsieur-le-Prince and the Rue Dauphine; on the west, by the wide stretch of waste ground that separated the Rue du Bac from the Invalides; at the north end flowed the Seine, and at the south ran the Rue Notre Dame-des-Champs, beyond which there were no more habitations. In this district, which was really as vast as a town, there was plenty of room for the Abbey of Saint Germain-des-Prés, with its courts and buildings clustering round the church; for the Carmelite monastery whose gardens faced the Luxembourg; for the Jesuits, whose principal novitiate stood where the Rue Madame now begins; for the Seminary of Foreign Missions, and a score of other convents belonging to a score of different orders.

In and about the deserted streets and waste ground that lay between these enclosures, the thieves and vagabonds held high court and eluded all supervision. So that side by side with the pious population within monastic walls there was another population that bore no resemblance to it, and was infected with every vice.

The pastor of Saint Sulpice who immediately preceded M. Olier, despairing of the parish, wanted to send in his resignation in 1641.

St Vincent de Paul, struck by this state of things, came and preached a mission there, the only one he preached in Paris. The result was quite extraordinary. It was in 1642. An immense number of his hearers were converted on the spot. The most hardened sinners, at the sound of his voice, publicly struck their breast, and rushed sobbing to the confessionals, to obtain pardon of their sins. The word of God sown by such an apostle could not prove barren.

The following year, M. Olier, his friend and disciple, accepted the presbytery, and moved it close to the church of Saint Sulpice with the community of priests that he had formed at Vaugirard, and he poured out upon that abandoned population the treasures of his inexhaustible charity and the marvellous graces that followed on his steps. The parish came from his hands regenerated. After some years, it had gained, by the piety of its inhabitants and the multitude of its good works, that reputation which still distinguishes it above all other parishes in Paris.

In 1652, the year after the birth of Blessed de la Salle, M. Olier retired to the Seminary to devote to its direction all the strength that remained to him. He wished, before dying, to insure not alone the regeneration of one parish, but of all France, by forming a nursery of priests who would carry their zeal into every land, and found in their turn other nurseries of evangelical workmen.

In giving up his presbytery, M. Olier had not given up his parish. From the Seminary, he continued to watch with fatherly eyes the growth of his works, and he was still the model and the inspirer of his successors. After him, M. Bretonvilliers, M. Pous-sé, M. de la Barmondière, kept his traditions which thus had time to take root, and are still living and observed.

The parish was administered by the Pastor of Saint Sulpice with the assistance of the priests of the Community and the Directors of the Seminary, who formed but one and the same Society. The priests of the Community fulfilled the functions of Vicars, and each of them was charged with some special work. Attached to

the parish-priest was a Council of Vestry men who met regularly and managed the temporal concerns of the parish. Finally, M. Olier had organized charity meetings, some composed of men, some of women, that helped him to direct, support and propagate his good works.

These works were innumerable. Fifty years after the death of M. Olier, on that soil which had seemed dried up by vice, and which religion had so magnificently fertilized, there existed, without counting the great monastic establishments that we have already mentioned, a score of communities of various kinds, teaching and charitable; more than thirty confraternities of artisans; congregations of gentlemen; asylums for orphans, for servants out of place, for young women who wanted to mend their evil courses; houses of retreat for persons in the world; in a word, all the inventions of a charity overflowing with zeal and most ingenious in its means and devices.

Up to 1669, the Abbot of Saint Germain had under his jurisdiction all the primary schools of the faubourg. The masters were obliged to instruct gratis all the poor who presented a ticket from the office. The faubourg Saint-Germain had been thus divided into seventeen districts, and in each of these there was a master and a mistress, which represented thirty-four schools. All the masters, with one exception, were laymen, and generally speaking the husband and the wife kept two schools, one for the boys and one for the girls. Besides these paying schools, there were charity schools. They had been founded by M. Olier himself, and were at first kept in the empty rooms of some buildings belonging to the Church.

There was a Rule for these schools. They were placed under the supervision of the Association of charity, which decided on the admission of the children. These latter were to be poor, at least seven years old, and domiciled in the parish. A member of the Association was named overseer of each district, and had the list of the children with their names, their age, the address and condition of their parents.

These volunteer inspectors visited the schools two or three times in the month; they had no fixed day for their visit, but came without being expected, the better to see for themselves how things went on. They enquired if the children were regular in their attendance, and they took note of those who were absent. If their irregularity had no plausible excuse, the overseers spoke to the parents; if it was persisted in, the children were dismissed.

The overseers also saw that the children were punctual to the appointed hour, and that there were no boys in the girls' school, and no girls in the boys' school. When a scholar was ill, they went to see him at his parents', and if these latter were too poor to take care of him, he was taken to the hospital.

The children stayed two years at school, and then they were struck off the list to make room for others. But the overseers continued to look after them, and if they were going to be put to a trade or in a situation where there was evident danger for their soul, the overseers tried to dissuade the parents, and sometimes, this failing, called in the authority of the parish-priest.

The children were first taught to read, and at the end of six or seven months they were expected to be ready to learn to write, and they were set to what was called the bastard Italian letters, which were the easiest. If the master did not know how to write, the child was sent to another school.

"Instruction in piety and the knowledge of things necessary to salvation," says the Rule, "was the principal object in teaching the children." The parish-priest sent from time to time an ecclesiastic to give an instruction on the catechism, which the master made the children learn. Over and above this, the children were taken every Sunday and holiday to the public catechism which was taught in various parts of the parish. Reading began and ended with prayer, and the children were taken to mass every day by the master.

Such was the regulation that prevailed in the parish of Saint-Sulpice from the year 1652, and which, in order to be fruitful of

much good only needed good masters. But these were scarce. They generally lacked either capacity or good conduct. Some did not even know how to write; others, instead of taking the children to church themselves, charged some of the elder ones to take them there, and mass thus became an opportunity of misconduct to all. Then, masters were wanting. In 1652, the parish had been divided for the schools into seven districts, which supposes at least seven schools. In 1688, when Blessed de la Salle was called to Paris, there was only one, in the Rue Princesse, a large house standing half way down the street, looking to the east. There was a picture of St Anne over the door. This house was close to the one occupied by the priests of the community.

M. Claude Bottu de la Barmondière was then parish-priest of Saint Sulpice. He was the third successor of M. Olier. Well informed, a Doctor of the Sorbonne, Director of the Seminary where he had been brought up, he was full of zeal for the parish, of which he had been named pastor in 1678 by the Abbot of Saint Germain. The charity-schools had been the object of his solicitude, and he had placed them under the care of M. Compagnon, a priest of the Community.

But M. Compagnon was breaking down under the burden. He had over two hundred children to manage, and his only assistant was a young man, quite inexperienced, who filled the functions of school-master. The pastor, wishing that the children should learn a trade while they were being taught reading, writing and the catechism, had established a woollen manufactory in the house, and placed at the head of it a man named Rafrond who was to teach them the trade. In spite of the efforts of these three persons, the charity-school of the parish of Saint Sulpice was a centre of dissipation and disorder. M. Compagnon was overwhelmed with work, and he saw that all his efforts were fruitless. He suddenly bethought him of Blessed de la Salle, of whom he had heard the parish-priest speak, and he wrote to him in the month of June 1687, to ask him for a master who would second him in the management of the school.

The pious founder had long desired to establish his schools in Paris, and preferred the parish of Saint Sulpice to any other. He had had an opportunity of admiring the zeal of the clergy and the faith of the parishioners, and it reminded him of the happy days of his ecclesiastical studies. This offer was, therefore, very tempting, and he was inclined to accept it. But he withstood the temptation, not wishing, even under these circumstances, to deviate from his habitual prudence and the rules he had laid down for himself. He never sent out a Brother alone, and never took charge of a school unless invited to do so by the parish-priest. He replied to M. Compagnon that he was willing to give him two school-masters if the parish-priest approved of it.

M. Compagnon set off immediately for Rheims to arrange the matter, but Blessed de la Salle was absent, so he had to come back without seeing him.

On his return, Blessed de la Salle heard of M. Compagnon's visit, of his urgent entreaties that one of the Brothers would go back with him to Paris, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Ought he not to yield? By being too rigid, was he not running the risk of losing an opportunity that he had long been waiting for, and that God now sent him? He prayed, he took counsel, and resolved to abide by his first decision.

He wrote to M. Compagnon, repeating what he had said in his first letter; he could not take charge of the school unless the parish-priest consented to employ two Brothers. M. Compagnon replied that he accepted these conditions.

The Abbé Louis de la Salle, brother of Blessed de la Salle, was going to Paris to enter the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. The holy founder desired him to call upon M. Compagnon, and tell him that he was ready to come to Paris, on the terms he had mentioned, and as soon as he should be sent for by the parish-priest.

Two months went by before M. Compagnon stirred in the affair. The needs of the school were growing more urgent, the burden heavier. M. Compagnon thought over the matter, and went off

to Abbé Louis de la Salle to ask him the cause of his brother's delay. The Abbé replied that his brother was waiting for orders. M. Compagnon wrote to Rheims. Blessed de la Salle did not move; he wanted orders from the parish-priest; M. de la Barmondière must be consulted. The latter, being himself member



M. Olier, parish-priest of Saint-Sulpice (p. 203, and following), from a portrait of the period. — Engraved by Méaulle.

of a community, loving his Rule, and practising obedience to his Superiors, exacted obedience from those under him. He was delighted with the sentiments of deference shown in Blessed de la Salle's manner of proceeding, and was confirmed in his good opinion of him. He immediately desired M. Baudrand, his assistant and future successor in the government of the parish, to write and tell him that he might come with his two masters, and that he and they would be heartily welcome. All difficulties were now removed.

Blessed de la Salle set out with the two Brothers, and arrived in Paris on the 24th of February 1688, eve of the feast of saint Mathias ¹. After a few days' rest, the Brothers went to their task together with the young master who had been assisting M. Compagnon. They divided the school into three classes, according



M. de la Barmondière, parish-priest of Saint Sulpice (pp. 206-213), from a portrait of the period.
— Engraved by H. Joffroy.

to their degree of instruction, and each master took one. Blessed de la Salle overlooked them all. He passed up and down the rows, exhorting the children to be steady, and instructing them in Christian doctrine. This first reform at once brought forth fruit. The children flocked in such numbers that the Brothers were overworked, and one of them fell ill. The servant of God at

¹ Moved to the 25th. on account of leap year.

once took his place, and gave in Paris the same example of humility that he had given at Rheims. He kept the class, conducted the children to mass, and taught them reading and writing until the master was recovered.

Nevertheless, despite the zeal of the Brothers, the school was always in disorder. The Abbé Compagnon did not live there, and, moreover, he had none of the qualities that go to make a good manager. He was active, but fickle and quarrelsome. He was quite alive to these faults himself, and having had experience of M. de la Salle's capacity, he offered him the entire management of the school. But Blessed de la Salle modestly declined the offer, preferring to keep to his own function, which was that of supervising the classes. The Brothers, although they also suffered from the irregularity of the exercises, had orders to be silent and utter no word of complaint, shutting their eyes so as not to see, their ears so as not to hear, accepting gently what they could not avoid, and living in peace with all. Blessed de la Salle saw the evil, but he waited patiently for God to send the remedy.

In the month of April, M. de la Barmondière came to visit the school with M. Métais, a priest of the community. He was struck by the progress the children had made, but also by the disorder which still reigned in the house, and which rendered the school more hurtful than helpful to youth. M. de la Barmondière, with great sagacity, guessed that M. de la Salle, whose value he was able to judge of after a month's experience of his work, was the only one capable of getting the school into a good condition, and he begged him to take it in hand, M. Compagnon giving up all authority. M. de la Barmondière added that if two Brothers were not enough, M. de la Salle could send for others, the parish allowing a salary of two hundred and fifty francs for each.

Blessed de la Salle accepted this new work from obedience, but not without fear; for he foresaw it would be a source of trial to him, and that M. Compagnon's jealousy would put obstacles in his path. He was not, however, stayed by these apprehensions, but set to work courageously.

The Rule which had borne such good fruits at Rheims, was at once applied in Paris. The Brothers lived as they had done heretofore, making prayer and penance the foundation of their charity for the children. The latter were put under a severe discipline. The doors of the school were open at a stated hour, and closed as soon as class began. Those who were late had to stay in the street. Every day, the children were taken to mass. The day, by being properly divided, was roomy enough for all the exercises. Even manual labor was retained. Blessed de la Salle did not approve of it; he considered it a source of dissipation without any benefit; but the parish-priest had established it, so M. de la Salle would not suppress it.

These reforms produced marked results in a short time. The children grew more docile and industrious. They made rapid progress. Even in the streets their improved behaviour was noticeable, and the neighborhood, that had long suffered from their noise and quarrelling, now admired their good manners. But everybody was not so satisfied with this improved state of things. The young master did not enjoy being restricted to a new manner of life, much more penitential than the one he had led before. The hosier, Rafrond, was also discontented; he still directed a manufactory in the house of the Rue Princesse, and he had to train the children of the school there to be workmen. The time allowed for manual labor had been cut short by Blessed de la Salle, and Rafrond, therefore, made less money, which did not suit him. But above all, the Abbé Compagnon could not forgive Blessed de la Salle the contrast between the present management of the school and the late one. He let himself be carried away by jealousy, and resolved to take advantage of the bad humour of his former auxiliaries in order to injure M. de la Salle in the opinion of the parish-priest; and the better to succeed in this, he resolved to destroy the manufactory.

He egged on Rafrond to complain; but Blessed de la Salle paid no attention to this. Rafrond, fancying himself necessary, walked off. The holy man let him go without a word. Knitting was

the trade taught by the hosier. Rheims was famous for its knitting; M. de la Salle sent for a Brother who was well up in the work, and could teach it to the children. The manufactory was quickly set up, and became more flourishing than ever.

The enemies of Blessed de la Salle felt their jealousy increasing with this increasing success, and redoubled their efforts to get him sent away. Tricks and manœuvres not having succeeded, they had recourse to calumny. One day, towards the month of July 1688, at a charity meeting of ladies held at the parish-priest's, M. Compagnon so far forgot himself as to bring a most serious charge against Blessed de la Salle. We cannot say what it was. The Saints are quick to forget injuries, and those who have been guilty of them have no interest in remembering them. The accusation was, however, so cleverly got up, that it made an impression on several sensible persons, and the parish-priest himself believed it. He was a simple, straight forward man, easily deceived. Incapable of deceit himself, he never suspected others of deceiving. He let himself be prejudiced against the holy man, and showed this by the coldness of his manner, which, coming after his former kindness, was the more marked.

The servant of God suffered all in silence, humbly offering to God the injustice of which he was the victim. Evil reports spread quickly. From the month of July to September, the charges brought against Blessed de la Salle and cleverly worked up by their inventor became so overwhelming, that the parish-priest determined to send back the Brothers to Rheims. As, however, he did not wish to make a scandal, he sent word to M. de la Salle by his director, M. Bandrand, to go away of his own accord, and to take advantage of the holidays to do it quietly. M. de la Salle did not ask the cause of this unjust and unexpected dismissal. It was the ruin of all his hopes and his most cherished dreams; but he submitted without a murmur, and made ready to depart.

The Abbé Compagnon had triumphed. He saw himself once more at the head of the school, and already announced the news of the Brothers' impending departure. But the wicked ones are

apt to blow their trumpets and cry victory too soon, for God interferences betimes in favor of those who leave the care of their honor in His keeping.

Blessed de la Salle had settled with M. Baudrand what day he was to present himself at the house of M. de la Barmondière and take leave of him. This interview weighed upon the parish-priest and woke up in his mind certain anxious doubts. The sight of the servant of God, whose countenance shone sweetness and holiness, shattered in a moment the whole edifice of lies that had been raised against him. The clouds of calumny fled before the brightness of virtue, and M. de la Barmondière said no more about Blessed de la Salle's departure. When the latter alluded to it, he replied: "We will think about it." On leaving the room, M. Baudrand said to his penitent: "He will think about it for the next three years without changing anything. Live in peace, and keep quiet."

M. Compagnon redoubled his intrigues. Every day saw some new plan against the Brothers. The parish-priest and the community were called in as judges, until the parish rang with the accusations. Blessed de la Salle alone remained calm amidst all this noise and uproar, and attended to his school as if he heard and saw nothing.

At last, M. de la Barmondière resolved to get at the truth of the matter. He opened an enquiry, and charged the Abbé de Janson, afterwards Archbishop, to conduct it. The latter was a clever and prudent man, well suited to throw light on the affair. He took his time, visited the schools, got to the bottom of the various stories, questioned, kept watch, and discovered nothing in any quarter except proofs of Blessed de la Salle's patience and humility. His astonishment was so great that he could not resist interrogating the holy man himself; he adjured him to break silence, and to tell him the whole truth concerning M. Compagnon. M. de la Salle tried to excuse himself, said that, as he had not examined the matter, he had nothing to say. The only favor he asked for himself was, that he might be informed of any faults

that had been noticed in his behaviour, and given any advice that could help him to correct them.

This last trait of humility, being repeated to the parish-priest, entirely opened his eyes. He gave back all his esteem and friendship to Blessed de la Salle, and henceforth only sought how to assist him in the free and peaceable management of the schools. But he was very weary, and thought of giving up his presbytery. In the month of January 1689, he resigned in favor of M. Baudrand, and withdrew into a community of priests, where he lived in prayer until his death in 1694.

M. Baudrand was an old pupil of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, who by his merit and virtues rose gradually to the rank of director. He possessed M. de la Barmondière's whole confidence, and assisted him in the administration of the parish. He knew Blessed de la Salle better than any one, since he had been his spiritual director. He did not wish, however, to seem partial or over-eager in this affair, and let several months go by without coming to a decision. He was waiting for an opportunity. Towards Christmas that year, the priest who directed the acolytes of the parish died, and M. Baudrand appointed M. Compagnon to take his place, and withdrew him altogether from the schools, which he entrusted entirely to M. de la Salle. The latter, by his gentleness, had overcome every obstacle.

Once free, he applied all his zeal to the reformation of the schools which soon became extraordinarily prosperous. The children, attracted by the good order of the classes, and the excellent teaching given them, became so numerous that it was necessary to open a new school. This was the wish of the holy founder, who had spoken of it to M. de la Barmondière. M. Baudrand reverted to the project, and at the beginning of 1690, the new school was opened in the Rue du Bac, near the Pont Royal, which was just finished. Blessed de la Salle was requested to send to Rheims for two more masters, and the parish-priest promised to contribute two hundred and fifty francs to their support.

The school in the Rue du Bac was soon as flourishing as the one in the Rue Princesse. But in the lives of the Saints trials succeed one another. They change their character, but the chain is never broken.

No sooner was he free from the persecutions of M. Compagnon than Blessed de la Salle had to contend with the school-masters, who brought an action against him; with the parish-priest, his protector, who abandoned him; with his own disciples, who rebelled against him.

The opening of the school in the Rue du Bac began to attract the attention of the school-masters. They lost a few pupils, who were drawn to the Brothers, either by their gratuitous instruction, or by their excellent method, and suddenly the whole pedagogical world took fright. Who were these new-comers, and why were they meddling with other people's business? Was it a reason because they chose to live like beggars and teach for nothing that they were to ruin the school-masters and send them to the hospital? What right had they to come to Paris? Had not the school-masters a privilege, granted by the precentor, recognised by Parliament, and which nobody had a right to touch?

These masters were poor fellows, eking out their living painfully, and therefore always on the watch against any attempt to cut down their scanty earnings. The school fees were a mere pittance, and it was often hard to get that pittance paid. The mode of teaching that prevailed forbade their receiving many children together in a school. They knew nothing as yet of the system of simultaneous teaching, or mutual teaching, which were invented later by Blessed de la Salle. The children were taught one by one. The school-rooms were small, the scholars few, and the schools very close together. The distance that was to separate them was strictly regulated by law: "There were to be about ten houses between each school in the populous quarters, twenty in the others." Many of the classes only reckoned ten scholars. Often, in order to increase the profits, the wife kept a school as well as the husband. She taught the girls in one room, while he

taught the boys in another. But even when the income was doubled, it remained a pittance. The school-masters were, consequently, a poor little needy colony, jealous, looking askance on anything like competition, and ready to seize upon the rash mortal who ventured to trespass on their rights.

The masters seldom pleaded themselves— they had neither the time nor the money; but the corporation took their part and stood up for them. There was a syndic that held very much to justifying its function, elders who were the watchful guardians of the privileges of the corporation, a common purse that had to be spent on something. They began a law-suit, and carried it from court to court with the slow solemnity of the law and the imperturbable patience of the age. Sometimes the suit lasted half a century, sometimes a whole century.

The tribunal of the first proceedings was that of the precentor. He gave judgment in the first instance on the differences that arose amongst the school-masters, and the quarrels they had with the rivals who encroached on their privileges. His decisions could only be reversed by Parliament.

True, the Brothers kept charity schools for the poor, and these latter, emancipated from the common law, were placed under the exclusive authority of the parish-priests. But children in easy circumstances came also, and if the Brothers did not refuse them, the paying schools would soon be abandoned. The school-masters, therefore, concerted together, and resolved to crush in the bud this work which they perceived dangerous to their own interests. The result was a war against the Brothers of the Christian schools which lasted fifteen years.

There were intervals and truces; the Brothers were sometimes victorious, sometimes vanquished. The affair was carried before divers tribunals; but, finally, the school-masters won the day, for an act of the Parliament of Paris decided in their favor, in as much as it obliged Blessed de la Salle to remove the principal seat of his Institute to Rouen.

From the first, the battle raged hotly. The school-masters of

the district of the Rue du Bac sent bailiffs to seize the furniture and shut up the classes. Then they summoned the Brothers



M. Baudraod, parish-priest of Saint Sulpice (p. 214 and following), from a portrait of the period.
— Engraved by Méaulle.

before the precentor of Notre Dame, who was, as we have said, the first authority to be appealed to.

Blessed de la Salle had a horror of litigation. He practised to the letter that maxim of the Gospel : “ If your enemy takes your cloak, give him also your gown. ” He did not defend him-

self. He considered his right too clear and strong to have any need of legal support.

He received at his schools the poorest children who were repulsed from everywhere else, and who could not pay the masters. Whom, therefore, was he wronging? The school-masters accused M. de la Salle of hiding under the name of charity-school a real school open to many children who might otherwise have come to them. The precentor, only hearing their statement, agreed with it, and condemned the Brothers.

Blessed de la Salle was grieved by this decree; his whole work was compromised. Even his director told him he ought in conscience to defend himself, or rather to defend the poor children whose cause he represented. Blessed de la Salle allowed himself to be persuaded. Convinced, however, that he could do nothing without the help of God, he began by making a pilgrimage with the Brothers to Notre Dame-des-Vertus, a place of devotion not far from Paris, and much frequented at that time. He said mass there, and the Brothers received Communion from his hand. The entire day was spent in prayer. They had all gone on foot, and come back in the same way, humble and penitent and tired, like real pilgrims who are in quest of a great grace. The Brothers had a piece of bread for their day's food; but Blessed de la Salle would touch nothing, preferring to fast the whole day, and only eat on his return at nightfall.

Thus prepared, he went confidently into court. He had no difficulty in proving that his school in the Rue du Bac was a charity school, opened at the urgent request of the parish-priest, that it did no harm whatever to the school-masters, and that there was no reason for suppressing it. These arguments prevailed; the sentence was reversed, and for some years the Brothers were left in peace.

But scarcely had this difficulty been settled when another started up. The costume of the Brothers, which had not yet been consecrated by long services and the gratitude of nations, appeared ugly and excentric. It had been criticized at Rheims; it was

now criticized in Paris. They laughed at it in the streets. Society found fault with it. One wanted the cloak to be short, another disapproved of the shape of the hat.

The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice allowed himself to be prejudiced by these opinions. He disliked the costume. He would have preferred the Brothers to adopt the ecclesiastical habit and long cloak. Blessed de la Salle would not consent to this. He held essentially to the Brothers not being confounded with the clergy. M. Baudrand insisted, and could not understand why he met with so much resistance concerning a matter of such very small importance. But Blessed de la Salle could not yield. He had not decided this question of the costume without good reasons and grave deliberation. Every detail had been considered. The public were now growing used to it; the Brothers had become attached to it; changes would involve expense, and, above all, they would upset the stability of this part of the Rule. One parish-priest found one fault with the dress, his successor would find another. What pleased in this diocese would not please in the next, and if the founder gave way once, there was no reason why he should not do so again.

The habit of the Brothers would become the sport of caprice and fashion; even its uniformity would disappear, and it would be obliged to change according to the parish.

These considerations determined M. de la Salle to remain firm against all influences, and, to justify his resistance, he drew up a memoir which, he said, "had been approved of by many wise persons." The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice would not, however, give in; he said the servant of God was obstinate, and punished him by diminishing the allowance he had made him for the schools. Blessed de la Salle was deeply grieved to find himself at variance with a man whose virtues he appreciated, and from whom he had received benefits; but he felt that he alone was the superior of the Brothers, and, therefore, being responsible, had received the necessary graces for guiding them.

Other trials were added to these, sharper trials, for they struck

at the heart of the holy priest. He had brought with him from Rheims two Brothers carefully chosen, and who, in the beginning, answered all his expectations. They were earnest workers and patient under trial. But the number of scholars having increased, they no longer sufficed for the amount of work to be done, so M. de la Salle sent for two more Brothers. One of these was a man of eminent piety, and was placed at the head of the house. The first Brothers were vexed at this preference, and considered that the honor should have fallen to them by right, and that, as in the army, promotion depended on length of service. One of the Brothers could not bear the vexation, and went away. He was an excellent master, a good penman, and clever at imparting knowledge to youth, but pride spoiled these qualities. His departure was a loss to the school, a deplorable example for his colleagues, a wound in the heart of his father. The comrade of this Brother remained; but he had a violent temper, and gave way to it. He also left the house, and ended badly.

The successive trials that Blessed de la Salle had undergone, joined to his austerities and privations, seriously undermined his health. Towards the close of the year 1690, he had gone to Rheims, on foot as usual. On arriving there, his strength suddenly failed him, and he fell ill. He struggled against the malady for a time, but all his energy could not sustain the worn out body. He was compelled to take to his bed, and for a moment the Brothers feared they were going to lose him. Terrified at the prospect of this misfortune, which would have entailed the ruin of the whole community, they sent up fervent prayers to God for the recovery of their father. The medical men prescribed rest, care, and substantial diet to build up his strength. He might have had all this with his family, and especially in the house of his grand-mother, who still bore him the tenderest affection; but he refused to leave the community, and only accepted the relief and restoratives that were compatible with the Rule. In sickness, as in health, he was to be a perfect model for the Brothers.

At the outset of his illness, he gave an admirable example of regularity. His grand-mother came to see him; but he refused to let her come to him in his room. He kept her waiting in the parlor while he had himself helped out of bed and dressed, and then, dragging himself down stairs as best he could, he met her with a cheerful countenance to prevent her seeing how ill he was. His grand-mother complained of this strictness, which, under the circumstances, she thought exaggerated. What harm could there be in letting her go to her son's room? Was it not a want of respect to refuse to admit her? Blessed de la Salle replied that he might certainly have with propriety received her visit, but that he thought it better not to do so. No Brother could now ever complain that his door was shut against his near relations when he heard that the founder, when seriously ill, had refused to receive his grand-mother. It is the duty of Superiors to set an example in everything, and even to go beyond the necessary, so that their children may not infringe its limitations.

At last, the illness was conquered, and M. de la Salle was convalescent. He wanted to set off immediately, and could not be kept back by the advice of the doctors. He thirsted to return to his austere life; but he was still very weak, and he had scarcely reached Paris when he had to take to his bed again, and at the end of six weeks, a more serious illness than the first declared itself. The community was plunged in deep grief. Blessed de la Salle alone preserved his serenity undisturbed; he bore pain patiently, saw death approaching without fear, and was even free from all anxiety about his work, which, he knew, was in the hands of God.

The prayers of his children prevailed. He was attended by a very skilful doctor, the celebrated Helvetius, who prescribed one of those heroic remedies that either save the patient, or kill him. Before, however, administering it, he warned his patient of the danger he must run, and advised him to receive the last sacraments.

Blessed de la Salle prepared for death. He asked for the holy

viaticum, and M. Baudrand brought it to him in solemn procession with several priests of the community and the seminary; a great number of pious persons joined the cortege.

Seeing the Brothers weeping round the bed of their beloved Superior, the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice addressed a few words to them full of affection and piety. He promised to be a father to them, and begged the servant of God to give them his blessing. The latter who was seated on his bed, wearing the surplice and stole, stretched out his hand, which a Brother held up that he might give the blessing; but he was so feeble that he could only pronounce these words that contained all his last will : " I recommend to you great union and great obedience. " He received Communion with fervent piety, and then placed himself resignedly in the hands of his doctor. The remedy had the desired effect. As soon as it was administered, a salutary crisis declared itself. Providence had desired to give Blessed de la Salle and those who loved him the merit of sacrifice without exacting from them the sacrifice itself. The servant of God was reserved for further labor and still greater trials.

Danger disappeared almost instantaneously, and strength returned quickly. The holy man was able to resume his austere life and his arduous work, without taking any heed of the warning he had just received. He had been compelled to cut short his stay at Rheims; he now went back there, leaving the Brothers under the charge of Brother L'Heureux, whom he designed for his successor. He was a pious, intelligent Brother, whom Blessed de la Salle was preparing to receive Holy Orders with a view to making him superior, and then withdrawing into retreat.

He had to this end made him follow the classes of the Canons regular at Rheims, where he won the esteem and admiration of his masters by the solidity and wisdom of his answers. Brother L'Heureux had returned to Paris, and was on the point of seeing his hopes realized : he was about to be ordained.

While Blessed de la Salle was at Rheims, he suddenly received a letter with the news that Brother L'Heureux had fallen ill; he had

been seized with a fever. Next day, came a letter saying the patient was much worse. Blessed de la Salle hoped at first that the Brothers exaggerated the serious character of the malady; but a third letter brought tidings of the sick man being at the last extremity, and expecting death every moment. Blessed de la Salle, in dismay, set off at once, in hopes of seeing his dear son once more; but all his haste was unavailing. He learned, on arriving, that Brother L'Heureux had been two days in the grave.

This event was a great blow to the servant of God, and caused him one of the greatest sorrows of his life. When, on reaching the house, he learned that Brother L'Heureux was no more, his tears burst forth; but soon his courage rose to meet the trial, and he bowed to the will of God without a murmur.

He saw in this incident a warning from Providence that he was to modify all the plans he had made. Not only had he meant to put Brother L'Heureux in his place, but he had intended that in each house there should be a priest to say mass for the Brothers, and confess and direct them. In the presence of this death, he saw everything under a different aspect. He saw that the mixing of priests and Brothers might be a cause of division and jealousy in the Institute. The highest in dignity would impose their particular views on the others, and would dishearten them. All the Brothers would be aspiring to the honor of the priesthood, and would despise the humble work of the schools; they would get to prefer preaching and study to the ungrateful task of teaching, and the community would die out for want of subjects. All these reasons, which had before escaped his notice, now rose up in the mind of the founder. Not only he resolved never henceforth to receive a priest into the community, but he strictly forbade the Brothers to think of entering Holy Orders, and as if to remove from them the temptation of doing so, he prohibited the study of Latin; on this point he remained always inflexible. And he was right.



Parish of Saint Sulpice, where Blessed de la Salle first established his work, before founding the house at Vaugirard (p. 227).
 — The old Rue des Déchargeurs, near the Church of Saint Sulpice. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Caharteux.

CHAPTER VI.

VAUGIRARD (1691-1697).



WE have seen the trials that awaited Blessed de la Salle on his first arrival in Paris, where he was abandoned and mistrusted by those who had called him thither, and who ought to have befriended him to the end. But another painful trial was to follow on this one : he was destined to feel the pangs of want, and the dread that his community might die of starvation.

When he came away from Rheims in 1687 he had left behind him three flourishing communities. The Brothers' House numbered six Brothers, without reckoning the two that he had

brought with him; there were thirty masters in the Seminary for country school-masters; and, lastly, there were fifteen young men in the novitiate. But when the founder went away, the work began to perish. The Brother who succeeded him as director was harsh, and wanted tact. Owing to him, eight Brothers left the house in 1688, and for four years no new recruits replaced them. The country school-masters went into the villages and directed the schools; but as Blessed de la Salle was no longer there to inspire confidence, no new subjects presented themselves, and this excellent institution was not carried on. The novices themselves were not properly directed, and M. de la Salle was obliged to call them back to his own house. But in Paris he had not the same liberty as at Rheims. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice and the sacristan insisted on the children spending all their morning in the church, serving masses. In this way they lost all regularity and steadiness. The novitiate lost its fervor, and soon died out. At last, Blessed de la Salle was obliged to send to Rheims for two new Brothers to keep the school in the Rue du Bac, so that there only now remained in the cradle of the community five or six Brothers, just the number they had had eight years before. Nothing could more clearly prove that Blessed de la Salle was the very soul of the Institute. Not only had he conceived the idea of it, but he was the workman who was indispensable to increase and uphold it. Owing to his presence and personal influence, the work had been founded in spite of all opposition, and had spread in spite of all hindrances; but the moment he went away, it began to languish, and if his absence were prolonged, it was in evident danger of perishing, notwithstanding the sympathy that surrounded it, and the help it might receive from outsiders. This bond which attached the Institute to his person was a constant source of preoccupation for Blessed de la Salle. It wounded his humility, and, as a founder, it alarmed him for the future. This fact explains many circumstances of his life. This is why he so frequently tried to find and train some one to be his successor. He gives in his resignation; he hides himself; he leaves the Brothers without news of him

and without direction. They accuse him of forgetfulness and neglect; he only wants to accustom them to do without him, like the mother who, when guiding the first steps of her child, draws back, and leaves it by degrees to walk alone.

As yet, the moment had not arrived to make this experiment; this was made clear by what was going on at Rheims. In a few months, three flourishing branches fell, and the whole work seemed on the point of drying up at the root.

Blessed de la Salle was, therefore, obliged to provide for what was most urgent. He had to seek for fellow-laborers in his work, and to bind them to that work by the most solid engagements. In this way the work could be secured, and safe from any blows that death might deal it, for its destinies would no longer rest solely on one life.

The condition of the schools presented other matters for uneasiness. Many of the Brothers were overworked, ill, exhausted by toil and privations. Shut up from morning till night in dark, narrow school-rooms, tied to a hard and ungrateful task, poorly fed, badly lodged, their strength soon fell away. M. de la Salle, who watched over them with the tenderest solicitude, saw that it was absolutely necessary to secure them some retreat where they could recruit themselves. Moreover, several among them, when deprived of his vigilant superintendence, grew careless, and fell away from their primitive fervor. They relaxed the practice of their Rule, and being no longer sufficiently strengthened in their religious life, they could not withstand the enervating effect of the world around them. It was necessary for them to return from time to time to their spiritual father in order to fan the flame of their vocation, to revive their inward strength, and stimulate their aspirations towards that ideal of perfection which he had conceived and realized so perfectly. With a view to these necessities, Blessed de la Salle hired a house at the entrance of the village of Vaugirard, a poor, isolated house, healthily situated, with a garden; and of this he made a kind of second cradle for the Institute. He remained there seven years, and, during that time, the Brothers of

all the Houses came to spend their holidays there, and those of Paris their free days. The sick or overworked Brothers also came there to rest, and new-comers to reflect on their vocations and be trained for their new duties.

It was just at the approach of the holidays in 1691, that this house was hired, and Blessed de la Salle took advantage of this circumstance to assemble all the Brothers of Rheims, Laon, Rethel, Guise and Paris. They all met on the 8th of October in that blessed house of Vaugirard. But as he had not directed them for several years, he thought that a few days' retreat would hardly be enough for them, so he kept them till near the end of the year.

Having all his sons gathered about him, he began by making a retreat of ten days with them. Each one of them, forgetting the world, found himself alone with God, and meditated undisturbed on the life he had embraced, and the duties it imposed upon him. When the noise of the world does not deafen a soul, the voice of God makes itself heard. At the end of the retreat, the Brothers were renewed in spirit. Blessed de la Salle then put them through a strict practice of their Rule. He reformed abuses, corrected their faults, and set himself to develop in each one of them the virtues proper to their state as Religious and teachers of childhood.

He chose amongst them all those who seemed to him the strongest and best fitted to become pillars of the Institute. He addressed himself to Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin, and proposed to them that they should all three together make a vow binding themselves for ever to the work. They consented, and having redoubled their prayers, they pronounced the following vow:—

“ Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate in profound respect before Thine infinite and adorable Majesty, we consecrate ourselves entirely to Thee, to procure with all our might and with all our efforts the establishment of Christian schools in the way that seems to us most agreeable to Thee, and most useful to the said Society. And to this effect, I, J.-B. de la Salle, priest; I, Nicolas Vuyart, and I, Gabriel Drolin, vow from this day forth and for ever, to the end of our lives, to procure and





maintain the said establishment without leaving it, even though only we three should remain in the said Society, and should be compelled to beg alms, and to live on bread alone. In view of this, we promise unanimously, and with common consent, to do all that we believe in conscience, apart from all human consideration, to be the good of the said Society. Given on this 21st of November 1691, feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, in faith of which we sign. ”

Out of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus Christ, there was one traitor. Out of the two disciples chosen of Blessed de la Salle, one was to prove faithless. Brother Nicolas Vuyart let himself be tempted later on by the power that his master's confidence gave him. He claimed to keep for himself what he had received for the Institute, he tried to set up his authority against that of his Superior, and to become the independent head of a school. But God always strikes down the proud, above all in those holy societies that are more especially devoted to His service, and whose foundations should be humility and obedience. Brother Vuyart ended miserably. Brother Drolin, on the contrary, stood firm to the last in the way he had elected. He withstood alike adversity and prosperity, he bore patiently the most cruel want, and later on he rejected honors and fortune. Sent to Rome by his Superior, he remained there almost alone for eight and twenty years, faithful to his vows, observing his Rule, keeping school, and at last came back laden with virtues and with age to die at Auxonne, long after the death of the master he had so loved.

Reassured as to the future, Blessed de la Salle gave all his energies to perfecting the Brothers, and worked at their sanctification unceasingly. They, on their side, seconded his efforts with the utmost good will, and by the end of the year they were so many new men, recollected, docile, patient, penitent and humble. M. de la Salle could, therefore, send them back to their posts with his mind at rest; but he was too prudent to leave them to themselves after such a trial. He exacted that they should write to him once a month to give an account of their interior dispositions. He an-

swered them punctually, and his letters are models of firmness and gentleness, of elevation and fervent piety, and at the same time of practical knowledge of men and experience of life.

He visited the Brothers, moreover, once a month, in order to see for himself that no abuses crept in, and having had reason to rejoice in their sojourn at Vaugirard, he invited them all there for the holidays of the following year, and so long as he kept that house, they came every succeeding year to make a retreat of ten days, and follow the exercises of the novitiate for a month.

But it was not enough for Blessed de la Salle to keep safe the disciples that he had. It was necessary to fill up the gaps that occurred amongst them, and increase the number of Brothers to supply the demand that was coming in from all directions. The work of the schools was a painful one, and wore out the workmen quickly. Death was mowing them down rapidly, whether it was that they were worn out with fatigue, or that God thought them ripe for heaven. It was necessary, therefore, to replace them without delay.

A novitiate was indispensable, and the house at Vaugirard could alone serve this purpose. But it was not to be founded without obstacles. In the seventeenth century, new works met with extraordinary difficulties in their foundation. All those that already existed drew close together so as to keep them out. It was as if the old establishments thought the earth was too small to feed, or too weak to bear any new-comers.

The parish-priest, whose permission M. de la Salle asked before founding his novitiate, forbade him to do it. He feared, no doubt, that this new work, which he might have to support, would be too heavy a burden on the parish. Blessed de la Salle could not give up his plan, and yet he would not disobey the parish-priest, so he had recourse to his customary arms, mortification and prayer, and addressed himself to God, imploring Him to move the will of his superior. His patience was put to a long test; M. Baudrand was inflexible. He even sent him word that he had better cease from practising useless austerities which would

not have the effect of making him, M. Baudrand, change his mind. Happily, God is more easily moved than men. He hears the prayer of His Saints, and when He has yielded, human wills are forced to surrender. M. Baudrand ended by giving his consent, and Blessed de la Salle, in order to forestall further difficulties, got from M^r de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, the necessary authorization for giving to his house the form of a community.

On the 1st of November 1692, a month after the opening of the novitiate, M. de la Salle gave the habit to five novices and one lay Brother. The Rule was hard both from virtue and from necessity. The house was poor; the doors and windows were badly closed, and let in the cold, and there was no fire in the hearth even in the depth of winter. The food was coarse and insufficient. The Brothers lived on the scraps that were given to them; every day one of them went into Paris to collect their precarious meal, and sometimes he was stopped on the way and deprived of it by starving robbers. Badly lodged, badly fed, the Brothers carried on their persons the livery of poverty. Patched habits, shoes that a beggar would not have picked up on the road-side, and battered old hats composed their costume. But through these rags shone a strange light of majesty, which drew towards them the respect of all good men. If their garments were shabby and soiled, their souls were pure. The bodies suffered, but the hearts were happy, and their countenances beamed with a serene joy which illuminated their whole person. Poverty is only repulsive when it is the outcome of a life dishonored by idleness and vice. When it is a trial cheerfully accepted by Christians and freely chosen in preference to wealth, as the counsellor of wise thoughts and the grand mistress of the supernatural life, it is at once transfigured and wears a celestial grace. So do we see it in the Saints; so it was with Blessed de la Salle and his companions. Many amongst them had followed his example, and left a position of ease, sometimes of affluence, to embrace a life of poverty. All these unavoidable mortifications did not suffice to souls that were eager to suffer for God's sake. To privations they added fastings; to the hard bed

they added long watches; to cold and fatigue they added the discipline; to the lowliness of their wretched condition they added the public confession of their faults. The world does not understand this holy cruelty; it laughs at it, and takes scandal at it; and yet how necessary it is! Blessed de la Salle called young men brought up in the joys of family life, in all the ease that competence gives, and invited them to embrace with him the hardest life that can be imagined. Was it not necessary, in order to ensure their perseverance, that they should first bring nature into subjection, and break all the bonds by which their heart and their senses held them captive? Was it not essential that, before engaging themselves by vows, they should serve an apprenticeship to the hardships they would have to suffer afterwards?

They were to be sent without sack or scrip into distant towns to teach the poor gratis. They would have to suffer hunger and cold and weariness, and was it not well that they should find in their novitiate a condensed experience of their future mode of life? They were likely later on to be assailed by fatigue, and disgust, and sadness, and was it not better, at the generous moment of their sacrifice, to light in their hearts a flame of Divine love which would give them strength through life? It was necessary, also, to arrest at the outset the feeble, the tepid, the cowardly, the fickle, those who were liable to illusions, and all whom any human motive might have led to the community. Those who do not reflect are apt to accuse the founders or superiors of Orders of decoying the uninitiated to their houses by all manners of artifices. The contrary is the truth; their great aim is to guard the entrance to it. The world has so few attractions of its own, that many people seek to get out of it. There is no lack of occasions. But all are not called of God, and false vocations are the pest of religious houses. Blessed de la Salle was to experience this himself. He was, nevertheless, very careful only to accept those novices who gave proofs of real piety and had the strength needful for practising the Rule in its unmitigated rigor. He set the example himself. He was the first to rise, and he waked the other Brothers. Punctual at all the

exercises, observing faithfully all that he exacted from others, subjecting himself like them to fasting, to poverty, to the public confession of faults, to penance; he was the last to retire to his cell, and he passed part of the night there in prayer. He kept down the flesh by severest corporal mortifications. More than once, his dis-



Blessed de la Salle during the famines of 1693 and 1709 (p. 236 and following). — Bas-relief of Falguière, on the socle of the statue at Rouen. — Drawn by Chapuis.

ciplines were found stained with blood, and the floor of his cell bore traces of his penances during the night. Inflexible for himself, he was gentle and pitiful for others. Without permitting any relaxation from the Rule, he was so kind in listening to their complaints and raising up their courage, that the Brothers, after a few minutes' conversation with him, would go away cheered up and full of zeal, ready to walk after him in the way of perfection.

Blessed de la Salle passed the years 1691, 1692, and 1693 in this dear house at Vaugirard. The Paris Brothers came there twice a week, Thursday and Sunday, and rekindled their souls in the fervor that burned on the hearth of the Institute. At whatever hour they arrived, whatever condition they were in, fagged, perished with cold, or drenched with rain, they joined the exercises of the house, and nothing distinguished them from the novices. The Rule stood them instead of rest and refreshment, and when, next morning, they took leave, and went back to their work, it was with a sense of being strengthened and invigorated.

We may here map in our minds the road over which the servant of God passed so often, and the better to do this, we will call the places by their present names. Starting from the Rue Vaugirard, near Saint Sulpice, Blessed de la Salle passed along the gardens of the Luxembourg as far as the Rue d'Assas opposite which was the monastery of the Carmelite Monks amidst fine wooded grounds.

A little beyond the garden of the Luxembourg, amongst the houses which are now at the entrance of the Rue Notre Dame-des-Champs, was the convent of the Annonciades, a large house which the holy man was one day to live in. The city ended here. The Rue Notre Dame-des-Champs was only built upon one side. At its western angle was the Convent of Saint-Thecla; then the plain began extending on both sides of the present Rue Vaugirard to Vaugirard and Issy. To the left, at the angle of the Rue de Fourneaux, was the Mill of la Pointe; at wide intervals on the same side were other mills still more celebrated; the New Mills, the Butter Mill, the Galette Mill, the Mill of the Three Cornets, favorite promenades of the students of Paris, who came there on holidays. The last-named was the particular meeting-ground of the Jansenists, after whom it was named. Here Father Quesnel used to confer with the heads of the sect.

The wide Rue de Vaugirard was also bordered on the right by fields. First you saw the house of the Child Jesus, and the convent of the Benedictine Nuns, and after that there were no houses until

the spot which is now Rue Copreau. The house occupied by the Brothers was in all probability the one that makes the corner of that street and the Rue Vaugirard, for it was long called the House of the Brothers. It became afterwards a famous inn. Blessed de la Salle had himself exercised hospitality there, that generous Christian hospitality which entertains more willingly the poor and the lowly. This house, the first of the village, then stood apart; on one side was a mile-stone with the manorial arms of Saint Genevieve. Up to this point, you were in the parish of Saint Sulpice, but on one side lay the territory of Grenelle, which belonged to the Abbey of Saint Geneviève-du-Mont; on the other side, the territory of the village of Vaugirard. It is not difficult to picture to oneself this landscape of the environs of Paris.

A number of young men came to knock at the door of the novitiate. Some were drawn thither by curiosity, others by restlessness, some also by the hope of finding comfort and rest. Others again were animated by a certain love of God, but without being called to serve Him in that state of life. Blessed de la Salle was not long in sifting out the true vocations from amidst the false ones. But, indeed, they soon made themselves manifest. The imaginary ones did not persevere; a few days of the Rule sufficed to make them pass out; but their places were filled up by others, and in spite of so many failures, the number of Brothers rose at last to five and thirty.

Blessed de la Salle, poor as he was, fed this large family; or rather he prayed to God, who supplied all his wants. Frugal and austere as the life was, these wants were manifold, for nobody was refused admittance at Vaugirard.

In 1693, a great famine devastated Paris, and the Brothers suffered cruelly from it. The charity that fed them grew cold, and more than once, they were without bread. Blessed de la Salle was not moved from his serenity, nor shaken in his trust. He refused to be better treated than any one else, and in spite of the difficulty he had in feeding his flock, he continued to receive every one who came to his door. But at last the famine became so ter-

rible, that the Brothers ran the risk of dying of hunger. Their food was brought from Paris, and robbers used to lie in ambush and seize it. The environs of Paris were frequented by thieves and vagabonds who roamed about the country seeking herbs wherewith to appease their hunger. Starvation is a bad councillor; it goads to crime. The Vaugirard house, being isolated and badly secured, was not safe.

Blessed de la Salle was obliged to bring the Brothers back to Paris, to the house in the Rue Princesse. They remained there two years, but they were not protected even here from the miseries of the famine. More than once M. de la Salle had to say to the Brothers : " There is no bread in the house. " Then they went to the refectory, and said the *Benedicite* before an empty table.

Every day this hard problem had to be solved : " where were they to get the day's food ? " A piece of black bread was a treasure, and all partook of it sparingly. One day, a Brother was sent out with four pence, and this was all the money that remained to the community. He wanted to buy a few vegetables for a last meal. On his way, he saw a house at the door of which a crowd of beggars were gathered round a charitable lady who was distributing alms to them. The Brother joined them. Surprised to see one in his habit asking for alms, the lady questioned him, and hearing that the Brothers were starving, she went to the parish-priest, and obtained relief for them.

But these last resources and every other came to be exhausted, and still the famine raged. Blessed de la Salle was not, however, for one instant disheartened or impatient. He dealt with the necessities of each day as well as he could; and accepted calmly the evil he could not remedy. By a special mercy of God, none of the Brothers fell ill.

In 1694, the famine ended, and the holy father returned to Vaugirard, leaving nine Brothers in Paris to keep the schools. He took with him all the others and the novices. Once more in his solitude, he resumed his exercises as before. He only thought of sanctifying himself and sanctifying his disciples.

The trials which threatened to destroy the community only served to consolidate it. It is always so with the works of God. They thrive on what kills the works of man. In the midst of this great family, the Brothers, far from growing disaffected towards the community, grew more attached to it, and were eager to change their vows of a year and three years into perpetual ones. The reasons they gave for this were very touching. "Why," they asked, "do we behave towards God as field laborers do to their masters? The year over, they are quits, and may seek another master, having one foot in the house and one foot out of it. We are like mercenaries. The period of our vows once over, we take back, at our risk and peril, that liberty which is the cause of all our misdoings, and perhaps of our ruin. If we made a complete sacrifice, God would make our hearts stable."

Blessed de la Salle with his usual prudence heard these prayers without being in a hurry to answer them. He adjourned his resolution to Trinity Sunday and desired the Brothers to pray well that he might discern the will of God. Then, the time being come, he chose twelve of the most fervent, and called them to Vaugirard to make a retreat. He remained in their midst, exposing to them the gravity of the engagement they were about to take, questioning them closely. At last, Trinity Sunday arrived. M. de la Salle first renewed vows which consecrated him for life to the holy mission he had embraced, and then, turning to the twelve Brothers, he received their perpetual vows of stability and obedience. The original formula is preserved in the archives of the Institute, written and signed by Blessed de la Salle. It reads as follows:—

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate with most profound respect before Thine infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself wholly to Thee, to procure Thy glory as far as I possibly can, and as Thou mayest demand of me. And to this effect, I, John Baptist de la Salle, priest, promise and make vow to unite myself and remain in society with the Brothers Nicolas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, Jean Partois, Gabriel Charles Rési-

gade, Jean Henry, Jacques Compain, Jean Jacquot, Jean Louis de Marcheville, Michel Barthélemy Jacquin, Edme Leguillon, Gilles Pierre, and Claude Roussel, to keep together and by association free schools in whatever place it may be, even if I should be compelled for this to beg alms, and to live on bread only, or to do for the said Society whatever I may be employed in, whether by the body of the Society, or by the Superiors who may have the guidance thereof. Therefore it is that I vow obedience to the body of the Society, as well as to the Superiors. The said vows, both of association and stability in the said Society, and of obedience, I promise to keep unbroken all my life, in testimony of which I have signed. Given at Vaugirard, this sixth day of June, day of the feast of the most Holy Trinity, of the year one thousand six hundred and ninety-four.

“ Signed : DE LA SALLE. ”

Blessed de la Salle, seeing his religious family thus constituted, thought that the time had come for him to resign his title of superior, and descend humbly to the lowest place. He, therefore, assembled the Brothers the very day after they had pronounced their vows, and tried to convince them of the excellence of his purpose. He said, amongst other things, that since God had united them, they ought to seek every means of making that union so strong that neither the world nor the devil could break it. They should, consequently, put all their confidence in God, and not lean upon a man, who, like a frail reed, breaks and pierces the hand that leans upon him. They ought not, therefore, to depend upon a man like him, who was only a poor priest, with no power, who three years ago had been called back from the gates of death, and might return there in three days. It was advisable that while he was still alive, they should elect another superior, and choose him from amongst themselves, so that the priestly character might not place between them and him a distance which might be detrimental to their union. If they did not decide promptly, and that he should die, all the houses would be independent ; there would be as many superiors as there were schools, and the flock would be scattered. If their

ecclesiastical Superiors should then give them a chief taken from amongst the clergy, the latter not having their traditions or their spirit, most likely, would want to make changes in the Rule, and the work would be marred.

The Brothers did not enter into this reasoning. They remembered the experience they had had, and were not at all minded to put the flock in the place of the shepherd, the Brothers above the father, the penitents to direct the confessor. Blessed de la Salle saw at once that they were not convinced, and forthwith began a new discourse more eloquent than the first.

The Brothers, out of humility, did not make any answer. Fancying from this that he had gained them over to his views, and seeing them ready to proceed to the vote, he urged them to make half an hour's prayer in order that the Holy Spirit might direct them in their choice. They prayed, and then the election took place; but the name of the servant of God came out without one dissenting voice. Disconcerted, touched, he reproached the Brothers tenderly with overlooking the true interests of the Institute, and deceiving themselves as to his merits, and left nothing undone to make them see that he was incompetent and unworthy to guide them. He then implored them to vote a second time, in the hopes that the Holy Spirit, moved by his prayer, would direct their choice differently. The Brothers consented, but this very humility displayed by the holy man only confirmed the desire of the Brothers to have him for their superior.

He was again elected with one voice. The Brothers now made him see that he ought to accept an office which was visibly conferred upon him by God Himself. At his death, which would come too soon for them, however long it was postponed, it would be time enough to put a Brother at their head; meantime, he must resign himself to remain there.

Blessed de la Salle raised his eyes to heaven, and submitted. But still convinced of the danger there was for the Institute in being governed by a priest, he made the twelve Brothers who had elected him sign the following deed :— “ We, the undersigned,

Nicolas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, etc., after having by the vows we took yesterday associated with M. J.-B. de la Salle, priest, to keep

Tres Sainte Trinite Pere, fils, et Saint-Esprit Proteger
 Dans un tres profond respect deuant vostre infinie et
 adorable Maiesté de me consacrer tout auant pour
 prouoir vostre gloire autant qu'il me sera possible et qui
 vous le demander de moy et pour at effect de Jean
 Baptiste De la Salle Notre promets et fait vœu de
 Mûrir et demeurer en société avec les freres Nicolas
 Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, Jean Partois, Gabriel Charles
 Redigues, Jean Henry, Jacques Compain, Jean Jacques,
 Jean Louis de Marcheuille, Michel Barthelomy Jaquin,
 Edme Leguillon, Gilles Pierre, et Claude Rouffet pour
 tenir ensemble et par association les écoles gratuites
 en quelque lieu que ce soit quand même de penon obligé
 pour le faire de demander l'aumône et de vivre de
 pain seulement ou pour faire dans laditte société
 ce a quoy le frere employé soit par le corps de la
 société soit par les superieurs qui en auront la conduite
 cest pour quoy de promets et fait vœu d'obéissance tant
 au corps de cette société qu'aux superieurs lesquels
 vœux tant d'association que de stabilité dans laditte
 société et de beissance de promets de garder inviolable
 ment pendant toute ma vie enfoy de quoy luy signé
 fait a Augment ce sixieme jour de Mars l'année
 de la Nostre Trinité de l'année mil six cent quatre
 quatorze

De la Salle

First formula of Blessed de la Salle's vows, written with his own hand. — The original is in the archives of the Institute of the Brothers.

free schools, recognize that in consequence of these vows and of this association contracted by us, we have chosen for Superior M. John Baptist de la Salle, whom we promise to obey with en-

tire submission, as well as those whom he may appoint our Superiors. We also declare that we do not mean the present election to



Monseigneur de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris (p. 242). — Drawn by Vidal; engraved by H. Joffroy.

make any precedent for the future, our intention being that after the said M. de la Salle, and for ever afterwards, no person who is a priest, or has received Holy Orders, shall be admitted amongst us, nor elected as our Superior; that we will never have for Superior

any one who is not associated with us, and who has not made vows like us and like all those who will be afterwards associated with us. Given at Vaugirard, the seventh of June, one thousand six hundred and ninety-four. ”

In 1695, the Archbishop of Paris, M^r. de Harlay, had died of a fit of apoplexy, and he was replaced by M^r. de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons. The latter, after his customary visitation, reformed various abuses that had crept into the administration. He had been above all struck by the multitude of private chapels. Not alone every community, but every private person wanted to have his own chapel in his country house, and have services there. The parish churches were nearly deserted; nobody came there but the poor people, and all who should have given the example were absent. The Archbishop could not allow such an abuse to continue. Divine service ought to be celebrated publicly, so that, all united under the eye of their pastor, the parishioners may mutually encourage one another, and receive more easily the counsels or the commands of the Church.

The Archbishop, consequently, issued a decree interdicting all private chapels. This threw Blessed de la Salle into the greatest perplexity. He was in the habit of going every morning to say mass in a little chapel close by, and taking the Brothers there. He was dispensed from going to the parish-church, which was distant, and which he could only reach by roads that were impracticable in winter and in bad weather. M. de la Salle went to the Archbishop, and asked permission to have an oratory in his house. He explained the reasons which induced him to ask this favor. It was not only on Sundays, but every day, that he had to take his disciples to mass. Badly clothed, and miserable looking, they attracted the ridicule and rudeness of the people, and it was painful to him to expose them to this trial. Moreover, this long daily promenade was a source of distraction to the novices, and caused great disorder in the interior exercises of the house. The Archbishop appreciated these reasons. He had, besides, been Bishop of Châlons, and had heard of the generous sacrifices made by

Blessed de la Salle. He knew his piety and entertained a profound regard for him personally. When he met the Brothers, he always enquired for their Superior, and would add : “ He is a holy man ; I ask his prayers. ” Animated with these sentiments, he could



Old church of Vaugirard (p. 244). — Drawn by P. Le Grand.

not refuse the holy man's request. He gave him leave to have a chapel, confirmed in writing the verbal authorization given by his predecessor to establish the community in Paris, and added to this all the powers necessary for exercising the sacred ministry, a great favor which he granted to hardly anyone.

Blessed de la Salle hastened to prepare a decent oratory in his house. With his own hands he helped to raise an altar, and a

Vicar general came to bless the little chapel in which the community was to hear mass and recite the offices both on Sundays and week days.

The parish-priest of Vaugirard was exceedingly angry when he heard this news. So long as private chapels were permitted, he resigned himself to the absence of the Brothers, but when they were suppressed, he counted on them for the edification of his parish. He came to see Blessed de la Salle, and being a Doctor of the Sorbonne and very argumentative, he set to work to prove to him that the Brothers were in duty bound to renounce their new privilege, and to assist at the parochial services.

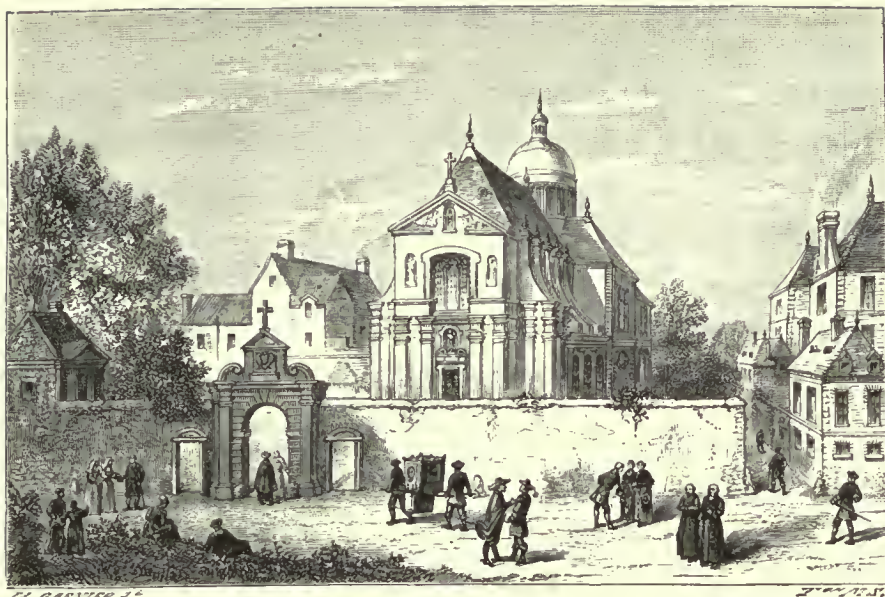
Blessed de la Salle justified himself. He did not deny the excellence of the principles laid down by the parish-priest; only they did not apply to him. "If the rule of assisting at the parochial mass is open to an exception," he said, "grant that exception to a group of young fellows who cannot go out of their house without danger. You would grant it willingly to a man in danger of imprisonment. If that man, in order to elude the clutch of the bailiffs in pursuit of him, were to come early in the morning to hear the first mass, you would dispense him with hearing the parochial mass. Let your charity extend the same indulgence to people who cannot appear in public without risking their vocation and exposing their soul to danger. Assuredly, no one deserves it more than these young men, who have not yet shaken off the impressions of the world, and who cannot appear there without feeling its influence, and without being subjected to mockery and insult that their virtue is not yet capable of enduring. You should respect the privilege our Archbishop has given me of erecting a chapel for the community. And this privilege seems to include exemption from the duties of the parish."

There is nothing surprising in those struggles between the parish on one side and the religious Orders on the other. The history of the Church is full of them. The parish is a little world where all the ordinary needs of Christian souls are supplied; there are found the baptistery, the altar, the confessional

and the pulpit. As to the religious Orders, they are intended to meet the extraordinary needs of Christian society and of souls. They form an august and necessary advance guard ; they fight in the first ranks ; they triumph over obstacles which the parish could never overcome. The parish and the convent are the two poles on which the Catholic world turns.

The parish-priest of Vaugirard would not understand these laws of Christian organism, and revolted against the pretensions of M. de la Salle. His vexation was so great, that he came one day to the house of the Brothers and broke out into bitter complaints against them because they refused to follow the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Blessed de la Salle tried in vain to appease him. Some time afterwards he calmed down, listened to the reasons which in the first heat of anger he had not understood, and restored all his affection to Blessed de la Salle. It was agreed between them that, every first Thursday of the month, M. de la Salle would come to celebrate a solemn mass of the Blessed Sacrament at the parish, and that he would bring the Brothers with him. He took them to the parish, besides this, on Easter Sunday, and on the feast of St Lambert, patron of the church, and the Brothers, by their modesty, their devotion and their recollection, edified all beholders. M. Baüyn, director of the little seminary of Saint Sulpice, also took the seminarists to the parish on those days, and said mass for them.

The two venerable priests, were to be seen going to the altar one after the other, offering the Holy Sacrifice with the piety of Saints, and distributing Holy Communion to their disciples, who all vied with one another in fervent devotion.



Church of the Carmelite Monks, from a print of the end of the seventeenth century (p. 248, and following ..
— Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Trichou.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LARGE HOUSE (1698-1703).



LESSED de la Salle had been three years at Vaugirard; he had spent there the years 1695, 1696 and 1697, and had taken advantage of the rest he enjoyed there to draw up the Rule and compose his first works. But, during this time, the number of postulants and novices had considerably increased, and from all directions young men were coming to consecrate themselves to the Christian education of childhood.

Many amongst them were not actuated by perfectly pure motives, or over-estimated their strength. They had, nevertheless, to be received, to be examined, to be

tried; for it was not possible to see at a glance whether they were fit for the office they aspired to fulfil, and the demand for Christian school-masters was so urgent, that it would have been a pity to send away any aspirant without giving him a fair trial.

The house at Vaugirard was too small to lodge a great number of persons; it was also too far from Paris; so Blessed de la Salle was obliged to look for one nearer and larger.

He had noticed in the Rue Vaugirard a vast building which looked suitable. It was situated a little higher up than the Carmelite convent, on the other side of the street, and was composed of several separate buildings, courts and large gardens. On one side, this house adjoined the gardens of Luxembourg, which then extended much farther than they do now, and on the other, it advanced quite close to Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, which lay along the fields. The barrier of Vaugirard was very near.

This edifice had been occupied by a community of Annonciade Nuns, of the Institute of Blessed Jane of Valois, known under the name of Our Lady of the Ten Virtues; the Princesses of France used to be educated there. Then, the community became relaxed, and was dispersed. The house remained long uninhabited; it was said to be haunted, and this report frightened away tenants. The landlord, consequently, consented to let it for sixteen hundred francs a year, a very small sum considering the extent of the buildings, but a very large one for Blessed de la Salle, who had nothing. But he was not downcast by this. The house suited him, and he resolved to hire it. He went to see the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, whose parishioner he was about to become again. The parish had now a new pastor. M. Baudrand had had a paralytic stroke in 1696. Seeing death drawing near, he wished to pass in retirement the few remaining days he had to live, and therefore took steps for placing the parish in good and worthy hands. He knew M. de la Chétardie, a Sulpician who had directed the seminaries of Puy and of Bourges, and who was now prior of Saint Cosme-l'Isle-lès-Tours, a benefice that he held from his grand uncle, councillor clerk of the Parliament of Paris. He was a man

of good birth, great information, and with large experience of ecclesiastical affairs. He consented to exchange his priory for the presbytery of Saint Sulpice, and took possession of it on the 13th of February 1696.

M. de la Chétardie brought to his new functions great firmness of character, affable manners, very sound doctrine, and an ardent zeal for the service of God. He soon gained the general esteem. The Archbishop of Paris, M^r de Noailles, whose opinions regarding Rome he did not approve of, confided several important missions to him, and amongst others, that of obtaining M^{me} Guyon's retraction, a difficult undertaking, which he succeeded in.

He was the declared enemy of all new fangled theories, and he showed this several years later by dismissing M. Oursel, Superior of the Community, who had expressed as his opinion in the Sorbonne that the Constitution *Unigenitus* ought not to be received. So long as he lived, he showed a great regard for Blessed de la Salle. He differed from him from time to time as to the manner of governing the Institute, but on every occasion he bore witness to the purity of his faith.

M. de la Chétardie was greatly esteemed by the King, Louis XIV., who liked to converse with him, and in 1702 tried to make him accept the bishopric of Poitiers. He refused the dignity rather than leave the parish. "I have sixty-six reasons for declining Your Majesty's offer," was his reply.— "And what are they?"—"My sixty-six years."

M. de la Chétardie had also much intercourse with M^{me} de Maintenon, from whom he got great help for his parish. He turned all his influence to account for his good works, and his charity for the poor was unbounded, and as liberal as it was tender. From the day that he was named parish-priest, he placed all his income in the charity fund, to be distributed amongst the poor, reserving only the bare necessities for the support of himself and a servant.

M. de la Chétardie heard with some surprise Blessed de la Salle's intention of hiring a house at sixteen hundred francs a year, when

he had sixty persons to feed and had not the means of paying for bread for them. He could not, however, mistrust the goodness of God, who had always borne them through hard times. The pastor of Saint Sulpice heard all he had to say, and ended by approving of his scheme. He even promised to increase by fifty francs the yearly pension of the Brothers, in order to lighten his expenses.

Blessed de la Salle at once made up his mind, signed the lease, and installed his community in the large house in April 1698.

The house was unfurnished; but there resided in the parish of Saint Sulpice a very charitable lady, *Mme* Voisin, widow of a secretary of State, who was venerated by everybody on account of her abundant almsgiving. On the advice of the parish-priest, the Brothers addressed themselves to her, and she gave them seven thousand francs which served to buy beds, mattresses, curtains, tables and chairs, and in fact all the furniture necessary for the community.

A little chapel formerly used by the Nuns was still standing. They enlarged it by adding a choir, and it was blessed on the 16th of June 1698, by *M^r* Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres. It was dedicated to St Cassien, who had been himself a school-master in times of persecution, and died a martyr, killed by one of his scholars for having taught them Christian doctrine. The Brothers were not martyrs, it is true; but every day they devoted their health and strength to the children, and wore out their lives teaching them the word of God. No patron could have been better suited to them than the holy school-master of the fourth century.

As soon as they were settled in the big house, Blessed de la Salle set himself to work to multiply the schools, but he wanted first to share with some of the Brothers certain parts of the direction of the house. The twelve Brothers who had pronounced their vows with him were no longer in Paris. He had sent them off to various houses of the Institute as masters and models. He selected two others; one of whom he placed over the novices, while to the other he confided the government of the Paris schools.

He was deceived in his expectations, and we shall see how these two Brothers, by their excessive harshness, discouraged those under them, and by their imprudence raised a storm in which the Order was near perishing. But these drawbacks were not apparent at first, and the Servant of God, confiding generously in the future, thought he might trust them with the responsibility of their grave functions, and turn all his own attention to the general direction of the Institute.

For many years he had been thinking of opening a new school in the parish of Saint Sulpice, for the district of the Incurables. He found a house that appeared to him suitable in the Rue Saint Placide, and the parish-priest consented to hire it. It was soon as full as it could hold. The success of this foundation again set the school-masters in arms. They began by seizing the furniture of the Brothers and the children. Blessed de la Salle flew to the rescue, but his protestation did not stop the bailiffs. The Brothers were summoned to appear in court; the suit lasted eight months, and during that time the school was closed.

M. de la Salle had been ill, but he recovered just in time to present himself before the magistrate with the Brothers. He spoke for them, and defended their case. The school-masters alleged that they took in children in easy circumstances, who paid for their schooling. This was not true. Blessed de la Salle defied them to prove it, and consented to lose his suit if they did so. They failed in producing any proof, and were condemned. The school was re-opened. It gained a new prestige, and was soon so large that the four Brothers in charge were no longer sufficient for the work, and two more had to be sent. There were over four hundred children. M. de la Chétardie came to visit the school, and was amazed at so vast a result in so short a time. He could not restrain his enthusiasm. "Ah! my dear sir," he exclaimed to the holy Founder, who had come there to receive him, "what a work is this! Where would this great crowd of children be now if they were not all gathered here? They would be running about the streets, serving their miserable apprenticeship to vice."

He then went round the classes, questioning the children on the mysteries of the faith, and he was so delighted with their answers that he embraced the brothers who had trained them so admirably.

These free schools were the favorite good work of M. de la Chétardie. He visited them once a month, and distributed rewards to the most deserving children. Order, silence, even recollection, reigned in these precincts lately so noisy and disorderly. The good pastor had established a particular custom for these scholars who were so well disciplined and so charming. On the first Saturday of every month, the children of the various classes, walking two and two, went to Saint Sulpice, where lighted tapers were put into their hands; they then walked in procession to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, where they assisted at a solemn mass founded by M. Olier to place the parish under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. After this, they received each a little blessed loaf that was given by some benevolent ladies, and then they went back to school. This spectacle of a thousand children, formerly left to themselves, and now so well behaved, greatly delighted the parish, and kept alive a warm interest in the free schools. *Mme Voisin*, who visited them sometimes with M. de la Chétardie, contributed large sums of money to them, and up to her death in 1714, was a devoted benefactress of the Brothers.

There were, therefore, three schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice, and when Blessed de la Salle removed his novitiate to the Rue de Vaugirard, he opened another there. Finally, M. de la Chétardie founded one in the Rue des Fossés-Monsieur-le-Prince, near the Saint Michel gate; but this one only existed three or four years, when it died out for want of support. The historians of the period state that in 1698 the Brothers taught in fourteen classes in the parish of Saint Sulpice, and instructed over a thousand children.

The big house in the Rue Vaugirard being easily available for all the plans of Blessed de la Salle, he made haste to found successively all the works to which his Institute was to apply itself later.

Not only did he erect there a novitiate for the young Brothers, a mother-house where the Religious from all the other houses could come from time to time, and rest from their labors and renew themselves in a more rigorous exercise of the Rule, a centre from which direction went for the entire Institute, but he established various schools there, schools which still serve as models for all the schools kept by the Brothers at the present day.

For besides the charity-schools, destined to the children of the poor, Blessed de la Salle had opened a boarding-school.

In 1688, James II., driven out of England by William of Orange, took refuge in France, where Louis XIV. extended to him the most sumptuous hospitality, lodging him in the castle of Saint Germain, where the dethroned King kept up his court. A great number of lords followed him into exile, and many who remained behind sent him their children that he might have them educated in the Catholic faith; for the persecution which then reigned in England had closed most of the establishments that existed for the education of youth.

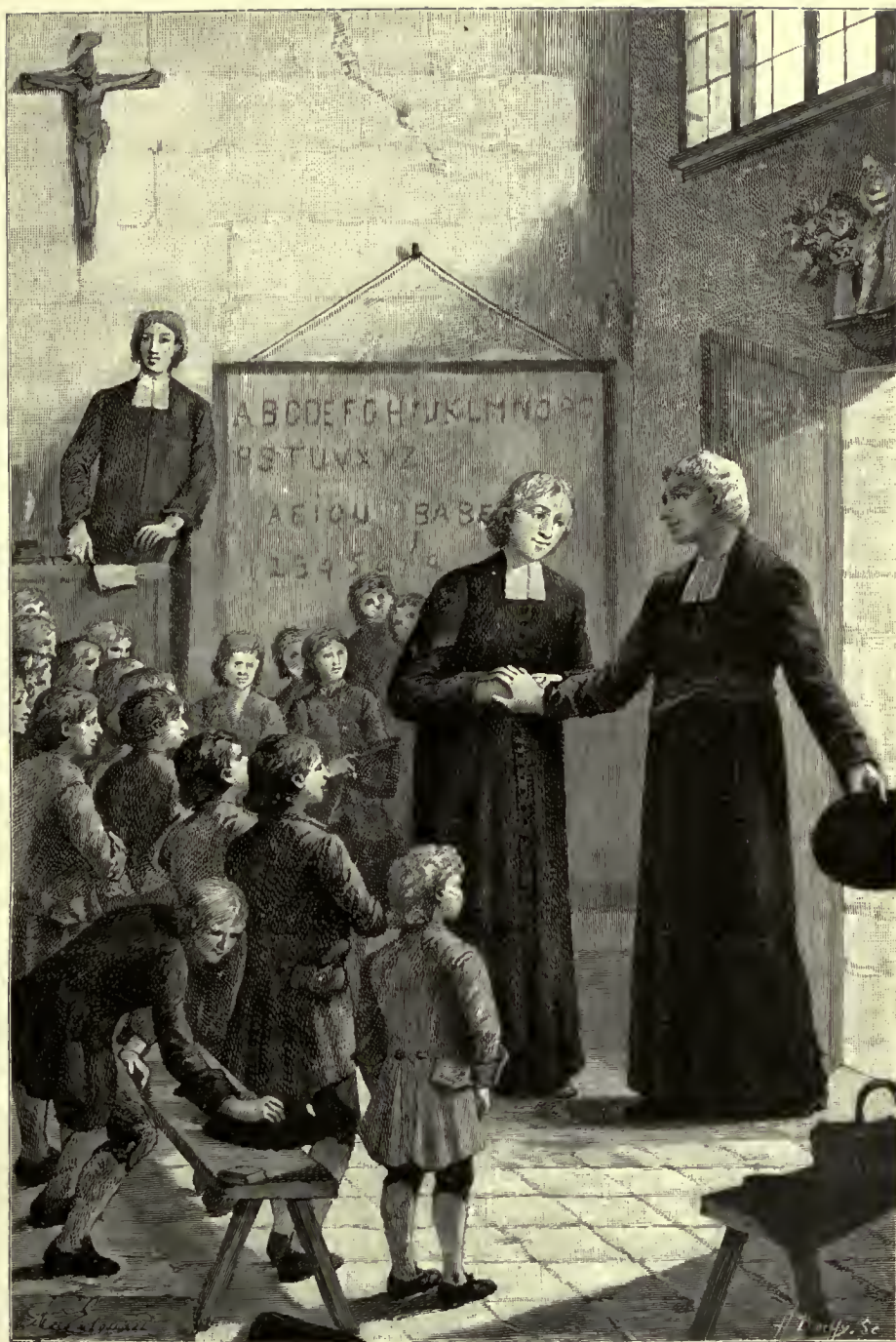
The greater number of these young men were Irish. James II. consulted the Archbishop of Paris, as to what he was to do with them, and the Archbishop consulted M. de la Chétardie. The latter said that he knew no one more capable of undertaking the education of these young men than M. de la Salle. The prelate immediately begged M. de la Salle to receive them into his house. and the holy man, who never refused a good work that was proposed to him, at once opened a boarding-school. Fifty young Irish lads were confided to him, and became the objects of his whole solicitude. A Brother assisted him in this task; but as these young men needed a higher education than that given to the children of the poor, Blessed de la Salle himself took special pains with their instruction. He succeeded in this enterprise. After some time, James II. wished to see for himself how the children who had been entrusted to him were faring, so he came with the Archbishop of Paris to visit the servant of God. He was delighted with the progress and the good manners of the young boarders, and expressed

his lively gratitude to Blessed de la Salle. In a short time, the youths were fitted to occupy the divers posts to which they were called.

Blessed de la Salle was, indeed, looked upon as the father of the young. People had recourse to him in all difficult emergencies, and although the direction of the primary schools was his work of predilection, he could not restrict himself within that single frame, too narrow for his all-embracing charity.

Parents who had unmanageable or rebellious children addressed themselves to him, and confided them to him to be reformed. The Fathers of the Oratory brought him a young Abbé who had been entrusted to them, and whose bad habits they had found it impossible to cure. This young Abbé was eighteen years of age, and belonged to one of the great families; he had an uncle a bishop; he was therefore likely to be called to ecclesiastical dignities; but he had no inclination for the priesthood. Confined in the house of the Oratorians, Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Jacques, he contrived to escape constantly from their supervision. He broke open the doors, he jumped over the walls, and ran away to pass the night in dissipation and gambling. The Fathers, despairing of being able to tame this wild nature, bethought them of handing him over to Blessed de la Salle, who passed for having marvellous graces for the training of the young.

He received this young man, and put him into the novitiate. The young libertine was at once impressed by the appearance of the Brothers, by their piety, their recollection, their fervor. His heart, hitherto closed against every good influence, opened as if by miracle. M. de la Salle had long conversations with him. He made him blush for his past conduct, then he moved him to weep over it, and inspired him with such contrition and such a love of perfection, that, of his own accord, he asked to follow the exercises of the novitiate. He took upon himself the lowliest offices, he kissed the feet of the Brothers, ate on the ground out of penance, and was always on the look out for mortifications. In a short time he became the model of the community, and he who had





been the least, soon outstripped all in his ardent pursuit of perfection.

Full of gratitude to the community where he had obtained his conversion, he aspired to the happiness of passing the rest of his life there, and entreated Blessed de la Salle as the greatest favor to give him the habit. The holy priest was too prudent to yield at once to his desire; he feared lest this sudden fervor might be one of these youthful flames quickly kindled and quickly extinguished; moreover, he could not consent to engage in so humble a career a young man whose family meant to push him on to high ecclesiastical functions. He must at least have the consent of the family. The young Abbé employed every means to obtain it. He wrote to his parents, and had recourse to the good offices of the Bishop, his uncle; but all to no purpose. The pride of his family could not brook the idea of their name being buried under so despised a calling. His letters remained unanswered. One of his relatives came to see him and used all his eloquence to disgust him with a condition so unworthy of his rank; but nothing could shake his determination. Time went by without abating his ardor. At last, as his family, worn out by his entreaties, took the line of not answering him, he took this silence for consent and, redoubling his supplications to Blessed de la Salle, he persuaded him to grant his prayer. He received the habit, and when he saw himself clothed in the shabby soutane—he chose the most threadbare he could find—when he saw his feet in the hobnailed shoes, and beheld himself attired in the complete livery of poverty, his joy was extreme. He would not have exchanged his hat for that of a cardinal, he declared. But his happiness was of short duration. His family were deeply mortified on hearing of what he had done. They dissembled their anger for a time, when one day they came down unexpectedly, and carried him off by force to another community, where he died two years later. This fact, which is by no means an isolated one, proves that Blessed de la Salle had a great grace for converting young souls, and great zeal in the exercise of it. He had the gift of touching hearts.

The parish-priest of Saint Hippolyte, in the faubourg Saint Marcel, having seen the good which the schools of Blessed de la Salle were doing at Saint Sulpice, wished to have some in his parish. He offered to defray the necessary expenses. The Servant of God sent him two Brothers, and the school was opened towards the year 1700.

This pastor of Saint Hippolyte was a man full of zeal. He desired to extend far beyond his own parish the benefits of the Christian schools, and was above all concerned at the great need there was of them in the country. He spoke of this to Blessed de la Salle, who in turn related to him the effort he had made at Rheims to found a seminary for country school-masters, and how it had failed. He was ready to renew the attempt; but he had no money. The pastor of Saint Hippolyte at once volunteered to find the money, and the foundation was made towards the year 1700, simultaneously with the opening of the school. A person named Lemoine hired a house in the Rue de Lourcine. The deed was first made out in the name of Brother Vuyart, and then replaced by a regular lease on the 22nd of April 1701 to M. de la Salle. The pastor of Saint Martin, of the Cloister of Saint Marcel, contributed to this foundation. Blessed de la Salle confided the direction of it to Brother Nicolas Vuyart, one of the oldest members of the Institute, who, with Brother Gabriel Drolin, had first taken the vows. The young men from the country were all sent to this house, and the seminary was established. These young school-masters rose at half past four, went to bed at nine, and divided their day between prayer and study.

They had meditation, spiritual reading and examination of conscience; they learned reading, writing, arithmetic and plain-chaunt. They also learned the art of teaching, under the supervision of Brother Gervais, who was director of the school. They retained their secular dress, and had no expense but their clothing. It was, in fact, a Normal School such as may now be found in nearly every country in Europe and America, except that this one was entirely gratis, and under Christian direction.

This establishment had difficulty in getting on. The landlord of the house first took an action against Brother Vuyart; the writing-masters took another, no doubt because he taught the boys to write. But the influence of the parish-priests of Saint Hippolyte and Saint Martin enabled him to get the better of these



James II. and the Archbishop of Paris visiting the young Irish boys who were confided to Blessed de la Salle (p. 253).
— Bas-relief by Falguière, on the socle of the statue at Rouen. — Drawn by Chapuis.

attacks. Ruin came from another quarter where it was least to be expected.

The parish-priest of Saint Hippolyte, having fallen ill, and feeling death approaching, wished to secure the future of his foundation. He could not bequeath his fortune to Blessed de la Salle, who was already known as the Superior of the Brothers; he could not

leave it to the latter, who had not yet obtained Letters patent and did not constitute a personality capable of inheriting, so he made Brother Vuyart his heir.

It was this bequest of the parish-priest of Saint Hippolyte that ruined Brother Vuyart. It gave him a temptation to avarice; he yielded to the temptation, and appropriated the property to himself. When Blessed de la Salle, on the death of the parish-priest, came to make arrangements with him, he sent him about his business with the remark that the fortune belonged to him, and that he would know how to spend it according to the wishes of the testator. M. de la Salle was too much accustomed to trials, and too faithful in following his master, Jesus Christ, to be surprised when, like Him, he was persecuted by his enemies and denied by his friends. He received the affront in silence, and refused to take any legal step to gain possession of the property which, under the name of Brother Vuyart, was destined to him.

This event caused the downfall of the Seminary for country school-masters, which had been in existence from five to six years. Those who were supporting it, on witnessing the conduct of its director, withdrew their contributions, and the young men all left.

Brother Vuyart threw aside his habit, had himself released from his vows, drove away his companion, and continued the schools on his own account. He kept them on for several years. At last, stung by remorse and by want, he made an effort to get back into the Brotherhood, but did not succeed. He fell ill the day after the death of Blessed de la Salle, and died five months later.

The holy founder had, we see, the intuition of all the institutions that could be useful for primary education, and which at this day are flourishing. He conceived them, he realized them, he cast their mould and drew up their Rule; then a variety of circumstances brought about their dissolution. Providence enabled his genius to forecast them; but his age could not understand them, and he was only permitted to sketch their outline, and to lay the first stones of the edifice which was not to be built up for a century later.

Besides the schools destined to little children, Blessed de la Salle opened, at M. de la Chétardie's desire, a Sunday-school for young men who were at work in their shops all the week round, and had only Sunday free for seeking instruction. These Sunday-schools already existed in Holland; but in France they were as yet unknown¹. The servant of God at once saw the great value of them, and left nothing undone to ensure their success. To draw young men away from the pernicious amusements to which they were sure to be tempted in their leisure hours, it was necessary to provide them with the attraction of solid instruction, which might be of use to them in their business. It was, therefore, agreed that they should be taught not only reading and writing, but also arithmetic, geometry and drawing. This education was tantamount to what is now called "higher primary." Blessed de la Salle chose two intelligent Brothers who had a taste for the arts; he procured lessons for them, and put them at the head of this Christian academy.

This school was opened in 1699, by special permission of the Archbishop. It was held in the big house of the Rue Vaugirard, which then served as novitiate, and it took place every Sunday at mid-day. All young men under twenty might attend. The lesson lasted two hours; it was followed by the catechism, and then one of the Brothers made a short spiritual exhortation. The school was such a success that it soon numbered two hundred scholars. Unfortunately it did not last.

The success of these Brothers excited their vanity and their covetousness, and they formed the design of leaving the Institute and opening a school where they would get other payment for their trouble than the unseen rewards of the world to come. They informed their superior of this intention, who, needless to say, left nothing undone to turn them away from it. He spoke to them of their vocation, of the perfect life which they had embraced, and which they were going to abandon for the miserable gratifications of life in the world. He reminded them of their engagements,

¹ Sunday-schools for religious teaching were first established in Milan by St Charles Borromeo, in 1564. See Buisson, art. *Écoles du dimanche*.

and strove to awaken in their hearts sentiments of faith and piety, as well as a little tenderness for himself, whom they were forsaking and grieving, and whom they would compel to close a school which had cost him so much care and struggle. But he pleaded in vain. His arguments broke against their hardened hearts. One of the Brothers ran away; the other lingered on a few months, and then rejoined his companion.

Blessed de la Salle was in dire perplexity. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice attached great importance to these Sunday-schools, which he regarded as the outcome of his own thought, and which shed a certain lustre on the parish.

M. de la Salle at once selected from amongst the other Brothers the one who was best fitted to replace the two deserters, and wished him to have the lessons necessary to qualify him for teaching in the Sunday-school; but the Brother recoiled from the proposal with insurmountable reluctance. These new accomplishments must be dangerous, it seemed to him, since they had been the ruin of two of his comrades, and he preferred to continue in the humbler work that he had so far been devoted to. Not only was he filled with this sentiment of fear himself, but he communicated it to the other Brothers so strongly, that the holy founder could not find one amongst them who would consent to undertake the new work.

They drew up a note setting forth the dangers of the Sunday-schools, and entreated him to take them into account, not doubting, they said, but that he would agree with them. Blessed de la Salle made no answer. Their minds were too warped just then to give up their prejudices. He went to the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, and laid the difficulty before him; but M. de la Chétardie, who was already annoyed, would listen to nothing. He accused M. de la Salle of being the cause of the departure of the two Brothers, the resistance of the others, and the closing of the school.

The holy man knew not what to say in his own defence. It occurred to him a few days later to go back to the parish-priest and show him the petition the Brothers had drawn up in order to jus-

tify their resistance. This simple action was wrongly interpreted. The pastor received him more coldly than ever, and accused him of having himself written the document, or ordered it to be written. Blessed de la Salle defended himself, but the parish-priest, carried away by his temper, called him a liar. The servant of God received the unmerited outrage with his usual serenity, and contented himself with answering cheerfully : “ Well, sir, it is with that lie on my lips that I am going to say mass. ” And he went to the church, and offered up the holy sacrifice.

He did not, however, give up all hope for the Sunday schools. By dint of seeking, he found a Brother who made the sacrifice of his personal tastes, and consented to acquire the necessary knowledge. The school was re-opened, and was very soon as largely attended as before. Young men flocked to it from all directions, and passed the whole day there in pious exercises, studies and amusements. They forgot their bad habits, kept the day holy, lost their vices little by little, and many became thoroughly converted from evil courses. This school was removed in 1703 to the parish of Saint Paul, where the jealousy of the writing-masters finally caused it to be given up.

Good was being done, but always in spite of obstacles. As to the Brothers who abandoned Blessed de la Salle, they were not long in reaping the penalty of their fault. Thus, the Brother who left the Sunday-school in order to make money did not succeed in his purpose. He led a wandering, wretched life, and died of want in 1709, in the parish of Saint Roch, without even being able to receive the Sacraments.

The greatest trial of the Saints is not the opposition of their natural adversaries, but of those who share their own sentiments and, like them, are servants of God. When the wicked persecute them, they have no reason to be surprised; but when the righteous torment them, they are sometimes startled and disturbed. Is not righteousness the same for all men, and can there be two ways of understanding it? Thus it happens that when the founder of an Order meets with opposition from men whose sanctity he vene-

rates, and from whom he is accustomed to receive advice, he begins to doubt everything, and asks himself if he is not the sport of his own illusions.

God permits these conflicts, and the history of the Church offers numerous examples of them. Blessed de la Salle, whose patience was destined to be fashioned, so to speak, in every sense, and hammered out on every side, had to endure persecutions from those who had long been his friends and protectors. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice himself, notwithstanding his devotion to the Brothers, took sides with the adversaries of Blessed de la Salle. We have shown how great were the virtues of M. de la Chétardie; it is needless, therefore, to say that malice went for nothing in this opposition. He simply did not take the same view of the constitution of the Brotherhood of the Christian schools as their holy founder. He saw things from a lower level, and his glance did not reach so far. He admired the good that was being done in the schools, and seconded it to his utmost; but, like the Archbishop of Rheims on a former occasion, he would fain have restricted the community within the limits of his own parish, or at least within those of the diocese. It was his predecessors who had called the Brothers to Paris; he himself had helped them to set up their schools, and he was still helping them. He considered himself as their chief, and would have liked to manage them according to his own ideas. He would not have prevented them from establishing themselves elsewhere, and going wherever they were wanted; but if he had had his way, each school would have been dependent on the parish-priest or the bishop of the diocese, without having any other links but those of a common end, so that the totality of the houses would not have been one vast Institute, governed by an independent power.

The parish-priests of Paris had had, up to the present, the exclusive management of the charity schools, and had contrived even to emancipate themselves from the authority of the precentor. After such a victory, they were but little disposed to recognize a new authority which had neither the majesty nor the prestige of

the former one. As the principal establishment of the Brothers was in the parish of Saint Sulpice, it was there that the struggle was to begin.

Blessed de la Salle could not yield. He was not jealous of his authority; we have seen how again and again he strove to pass it on to another, how humble he was and how eager to be forgotten; but so long as he was at the head of the Institute, he was bound to defend its interests. He had, moreover, special lights for governing it which God reserves to founders, and which, to those who receive them, bear the character of unerring certainty. To make these lights prevail, was to watch over the treasure that had been entrusted to him; to abandon them, was to prove himself unfaithful to his mission.

Blessed de la Salle could not, therefore, sacrifice the Rule he had established, and subsequent events proved how wise he was in remaining inexorable. The Church of France was about to be divided by Jansenism, and was beginning to feel the first symptoms of the heresy. Several bishops were to fall victims to its seductive wiles. What might not have happened if the Brothers had been under their separate and exclusive direction, without being supported by the bond that bound them to the mother house? The greater number would have been, in their turn, drawn into error and revolt, and the faith of the people would have been grievously weakened. They were preserved from the contagion by the orthodoxy of their founder, who remained immovable in his perfect allegiance to the Holy See. In several dioceses, the Brothers were persecuted because of their attachment to the decisions of Rome; but they stood firm, and their union secured their independence.

In holding out against the plans proposed to him, Blessed de la Salle did not certainly foresee the final consequences of his firmness, any more than his adversaries foresaw the fatal results which the triumph of their reforms would have produced. Both sides were actuated by straight-forward motives; but M. de la Salle, having an Institute to found, had special inspiration to guide him, and he was resolved, even at the price of his honor and his

peace, to carry out to the end the mission that had been confided to him.

The conflict broke out in regard to certain administrative details. Blessed de la Salle had placed at the head of the Novitiate a Brother whose imprudent zeal did not sufficiently consider the relatively weak virtue of his disciples. When the servant of God was there, he softened this indiscreet severity; but during an absence of some days which he had to make on the business of the community, the director of novices, feeling himself no longer restrained, gave way to the vehemence of his temper, and overpowered some of the young men with exaggerated penances. These latter, instead of awaiting the return of their father, broke forth into loud complaints, and went off to the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, to whom they related the treatment they had suffered, and the marks of which they still bore. They did not accuse Blessed de la Salle, who was absent, and for whom they had the deepest tenderness; but M. de la Chétardie, who had had some differences of opinion with him, held him responsible for the faults of his subordinates. He demanded a written deposition of the plaintiffs, and then waited for an occasion to make use of it.

The director of the Paris schools, Brother Ponce, was himself much too severe. He was of a hard nature from which Blessed de la Salle had to suffer later on. One Sunday, he went with the Brothers to the Novitiate, where he imposed a rigorous penance on a young novice who was learning in the schools under his direction. The novice made his escape, and carried his grievance straight to the parish-priest.

On hearing this new complaint, M. de la Chétardie no longer had any doubt but that these results were the effect of an organized system of direction imposed by the founder himself, and as he already found fault with his administration, he concluded that he was totally unfit to govern. Without examining farther into the affair, he received the new declaration, joined it to the others, and drew up a brief which he forwarded to the ecclesiastical authorities. It is very likely that he seized this opportunity





to lodge his own complaint, and give his opinion on several points of M. de la Salle's administration. The latter was accused not only of having made a bad choice in the directors of the Brothers, and of having ordered them to be too severe; his doctrine was incriminated, and the facts brought against him were laid to the account of a mistaken piety; the accusers went so far as to charge him with Quietism.

Cardinal de Noailles occupied at this date the Archiepiscopal See of Paris. He was a well-informed and charitable man; but of weak character and vascillating mind. As Bishop of Châlons, he had approved of Quesnel's moral reflexions; as Archbishop of Paris, he had condemned the Jansenist book of Abbé Barcos. Some time afterwards, he took up arms against the Jesuits, and caused divers propositions taken from their writings to be condemned in the Assembly of the clergy of 1700. In 1713 he refused to receive the Bull *Unigenitus*; some months later, he revoked the approbation he had given to Quesnel's book. In 1717 he put himself at the head of those who appealed against the Bull *Unigenitus*, and published a Pastoral letter which was condemned in Rome. Finally, he repented; he made his submission, wrote a touching letter to the Pope, retracted his appeal, and kept all his promises to the Holy See.

Such a man was likely to be easily prejudiced. Although at the outset he was favorable to Blessed de la Salle, to whom he had granted extended powers, he now lent his ear to the charges that were brought against him, and ordered his Vicar general, M. Pirot, to enquire into these complaints. M. Pirot was Doctor and Professor at the Sorbonne, Canon and Chancellor of Paris, and seventy-one years of age; he seemed just the right man to carry out prudently so delicate a mission. For an entire month, once a week, he came to the Novitiate, armed with powers from the Archbishop, and obliged the Brothers to reveal to him on their oath all the grievances they had. Blessed de la Salle was then absent, probably at Troyes, founding a school. He returned while the enquiry was going on; but, humble and resigned, as usual, he

asked no questions, did not defend himself, but waited patiently on the good pleasure of Providence.

The investigation proved favorable to him. All the Brothers loved him dearly; they were living in peace, happy in their calling, attached to their Rule, and, with the exception of three who were discontented with the others because they were discontented with themselves, nobody complained.

Admitting even that complaints were grounded, they did not inculpate M. de la Salle, whose gentleness every one praised, and yet the holy priest was alone made responsible. Calumny had its own way against this silent man, who did not answer his accusers, but confined himself to praying and doing good. Petty jealousies excited by his virtues had gathered round him, and were now circumventing him, and shutting out the remembrance of his works. M. Pirot allowed himself to be deceived, and carried the Archbishop with him. Soon after, Blessed de la Salle went to pay his respects to the prelate, who received him with his usual politeness, but after a few minutes' conversation, without a word of reproach or explanation to account for his decision, he remarked quietly : " Sir, you are no longer Superior of your community; I have provided it with another." Blessed de la Salle felt the blow thus harshly dealt him, and for which nothing had prepared him. He did not try to parry it, he asked no questions, but withdrew in silence, blessing God who had permitted him to be humiliated. He had often desired to be relieved of the burden which weighed so heavily on him. His prayer was heard.

He came home, and said not a word to any one about what had occurred. M. Pirot, who had been charged with the enquiry, was also charged to execute the sentence. He sent word privately to Blessed de la Salle what day he would come and install the new Superior, and Blessed de la Salle, fearing some resistance on the part of the Brothers, merely announced to them that there was to be a great assembly, without saying for what purpose.

The first Sunday of Advent 1702, all the Brothers of Paris were collected in the large house. A hall had been prepared and dec-

orated. The Brothers were wondering who would be the high personage that was expected, and what ceremony he was going to preside over. Blessed de la Salle, cheerful and smiling, as usual, superintended every thing. At four o'clock, after Vespers, a coach stopped at the door. The Vicar general, M. Pirot, alighted, accompanied by a young Abbé. M. de la Salle received him with due honor, and conducted him to the seat that had been prepared for him. His companion sat down beside him, and the bell rang to call in the Brothers, who were all curiosity as to what was going to happen.

When silence reigned in the hall, M. Pirot opened speech.

Accustomed to address audiences that were often hard to manage, and foreseeing resistance, he proceeded cautiously, and began by extolling M. de la Salle, proclaiming him the man chosen by God to found the work, and carry it to its present point. He spoke of his virtues, the labors he had undergone, the services he had rendered, and was lavish of praise. The Brothers listened with delight while their beloved Father was spoken of in these terms, and drowned M. Pirot's voice at intervals with their bursts of applause.

But suddenly the tone changed, the orator turned from Blessed de la Salle to the new companion he had brought with him, and began his panegyric. M. Bricot, whom he had the pleasure of introducing to them, was a young priest from Lyons, full of virtues and merit; he trusted they would obey him in all things, for he was worthy of their esteem and confidence. The Brothers, at first surprised and mystified by this discourse about a stranger, pricked up their ears and began to see through its meaning. The moment they perceived what the orator was about, one of the principal among them, unable to contain himself, advanced respectfully to M. Pirot, and informed him in the name of all that they already had a Superior, and begged that he would not think of giving them another.

M. Pirot, quite unmoved, waved him aside with a gesture of his hand, and, resuming his discourse, went on to speak with precision

of the order he had to execute, and the duty it was on their side to obey it. It was, in fact, a formal command.

Then began the tumult : " M. de la Salle is our only Superior; we will have no other! " cry out the Brothers and novices in chorus; and they add that the Archbishop must have been deceived, otherwise he never would have come to a decision so contrary to justice and their unanimous desire. The holy founder, grieved by this resistance, raised his voice to quiet the uproar, and reminded the Brothers of their promises to him. In virtue of that authority invested in him, he requested them to submit to the order conveyed to them, and not set an example of obstinacy and rebellion.

Under other circumstances, his words would have had their immediate effect; but the Brothers had now strong reasons to oppose to them, and they spoke them out boldly. They had submitted themselves to him precisely because he had their whole confidence, but they could not transmit that confidence and his authority at a moment's notice to another. He had created the work, he had directed it; what proof was there that he had lost the grace of God, and that another had obtained it? The motive in changing him was to change the Rule. But they were attached to the Rule, and it would be unfair, as well as cruel, to come now and overthrow the work to which they had devoted themselves, and the state they had embraced.

All this clamor proved to demonstration how false were the reports on which the Archbishop's sentence had been founded. If the Rule had been too severe, and M. de la Salle a hard and harsh master, his disciples would assuredly not be so hot in his defence.

M. Pirot ought to have seen at once the mistake he had made, and withdrawn. But the battle had begun, and self-love was up in arms.

He had no sound arguments to oppose to those of the Brothers, so he entrenched himself behind the principle of authority. He took out the Archbishop's orders, sealed with his seal, and read

them. This deed, in which were set forth the so called misdemeanors of Blessed de la Salle, increased the tumult. The Brothers could not contain their indignation against those who had traduced their Superior, and they appealed from the Archbishop duped to the Archbishop in possession of the truth.

The master of Novices, whose imprudent direction had brought about the complaints, interfered in his turn, and began loudly to defend his Superior; but he only drew upon himself the wrath of M. Pirot, who looked on him as the author of the unpleasant position in which he, M. Pirot, found himself. He silenced him rudely. "What! you dare to speak, you who are the primary cause of all this scandal, and unworthy of the post you hold!" The unlucky Brother held his peace and withdrew.

But there was another person present, who was to the full as much embarrassed. This was M. Bricot, who had come here to be solemnly installed, and who, instead of the honors he anticipated, got nothing but snubs. It was plain that nobody had the least intention of obeying him, and the discussion was only increasing the antipathy of the Brothers for a Superior who was being forced upon them. The latter felt he was playing a ridiculous part while his rights and titles were being fought over. He endeavoured to put an end to the scene by begging M. Pirot to leave the Brothers their Superior, adding that, for his part, he would never consent to take the keys of a house where the hearts were closed against him. The conflict lasted a long time. The Brothers would not yield, and M. Pirot would not own himself beaten. But the one who suffered most of all was M. de la Salle.

This public testimony of esteem and affection from his disciples hurt his humility. The rebellion distressed him. Besides this, the hopes he had cherished of being relieved of his burden, and consecrating the rest of his days to solitude and prayer, were again disappointed.

He did not despair, however, of bringing the Brothers round in time, and when he was accompanying M. Pirot to the door, he told him so. But the Brothers overheard the remark, and at once

flatly contradicted him. "Our determination is bound up with our vow," they declared; "in keeping to the one, we feel that we are being faithful to the other. We will have no Superior but our father. If another is forced upon us, let that other bring new subjects with him, for we are all resolved to walk out of the house."

M. Pirot took his departure, carrying with him the conviction that the bond between M. de la Salle and the Brothers was indissoluble, and that it would be impossible to remove him without destroying the community. As he was a most worthy man, he would not for any consideration, any more than the Cardinal, have ruined a work which was visibly blessed of God, and which produced excellent fruits. There only remained for him to get out of the dilemma as well as he could.

The authority of the Cardinal had been openly defied, and it had been said that he had been misled. Alas! it was just at this moment that he was himself publicly declaring that the Church "might be mistaken, in asserting that the condemned propositions were in Jansenius;" and some years later, he was to appeal from the Pope to the Council, in regard to the Bull *Unigenitus*.

M. Pirot could not do less than bear witness to the close union which subsisted between Blessed de la Salle and his disciples, and he added that if it were the same in every community, it would be Paradise, and all the inmates saints. This eulogy of the Brothers was fatal to the saintly founder. The Archbishop grew more incensed; he was angry with his Vicar general, whose vehemence and awkwardness he blamed; with the Brothers, whose resistance held his episcopal authority suspended; with M. de la Salle, whose virtues had been a scandal to less perfect men.

It was not that M. de la Salle did not humble himself, and try to disarm his adversaries. Fearing lest he should be held responsible for the attachment that his children bore him, he went to the Archbishop, fell on his knees before him, and with tears begged pardon for the Brothers' resistance to his orders. The prelate remained some time as if struck dumb.

He knew how true was Blessed de la Salle's assertion, but it cost him too much to own it; he stood up, and leaving the holy man prostrate before him, walked away without uttering a word. Blessed de la Salle accepted uncomplainingly this new outrage; he went home, and resumed the tenour of his life.

Meantime, the conflict continued. The Brothers of Paris resolved to interfere and put an end to it. They had recourse to the parish-priest, whose prudence and devotion to the Institute they were sure of. M. de la Chétardie in his turn confided the delicate negotiation to a priest of the community of Saint Sulpice, afterwards Bishop of Châlons, the Abbé Madot.

The latter undertook, without making any noise, to bring the Brothers to an appearance of submission, which, without exacting from them the sacrifice of the points they held to, would save, at least outwardly, the honor of the Archbishop, if, indeed, the honor of authority consists in never being in the wrong, or rather in never acknowledging it. The Abbé Madot set off to the novitiate, and took the Brothers apart, one by one, and placed before them the arguments best calculated to make an impression on them. Young and simple and straight-forward, they would have been easily persuaded, had not their mistrust been aroused: as it was, they flatly refused to lend themselves to any compromise. In vain did the Abbé repeat that their resistance was an insult to the Archbishop. They were willing to make the most abject apologies for the insult; but they had no mind to change the Rule, nor to accept a new Superior, and they must have written guarantees. At last they agreed to meet half way. It was settled that they would wait in a body on M. Pirot, acknowledge their misbehaviour, and accept the new Superior, but on the express condition, "in writing," that this new Superior should only have a nominal title, should only come to the community for form's sake, should change nothing, and that Blessed de la Salle should retain all his power.

After fighting a whole morning, the Abbé Madot, seeing that he could get no more, had to content himself with this result.

He marched off the twelve Brothers to the Sorbonne, where Abbé Pirot was. They presented their petition on their knees, while giving him to understand that their submission was distinctly conditional. He seemed satisfied.

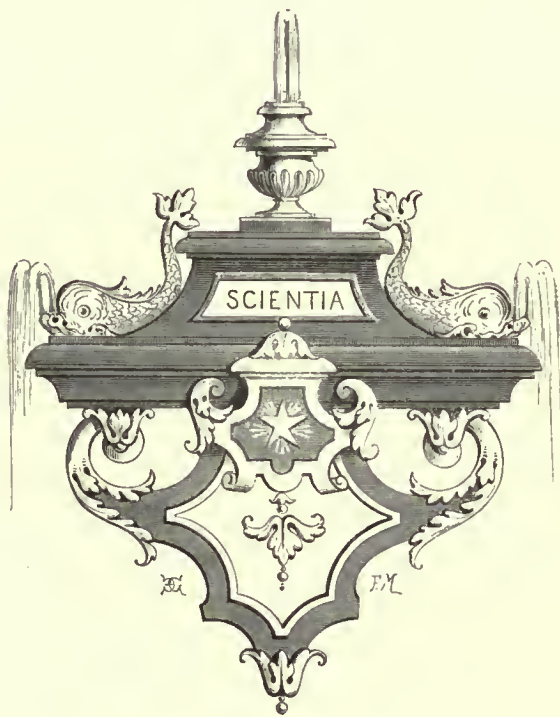
This scene took place on the 8th of December. The following Sunday, the Abbé Pirot came to the house with the Abbé Bricot; he again held forth to the Brothers, then the whole community went to the chapel, and they sang the *Te Deum*. After this formality, the new Superior took leave. He came back once more at the end of three months, to put in an appearance, and after that he never was seen again. The Archbishop gave him another employment.

So the conflict was settled to the satisfaction of both parties. Blessed de la Salle, however, anxious to prevent any future repetition of the same complaints, modified the severity of the Rule, and adopted certain suggestions that were made to him by his ecclesiastical superiors. The Rule was much less severe than that of la Trappe, but he had thought it necessary to conquer nature in order that grace might superabound. He humbly submitted his own opinion to the remonstrances of others.

The master of novices, whose imprudent severity had brought about all these vexations, bore the penalty of it. His excentric and capricious disposition could not long support the yoke he had imposed upon himself. He asked Blessed de la Salle to send him to another house and give him charge of a school. This was refused him. He was irritated, led away another Brother, and the two made their escape. They went to la Trappe, and asked to be admitted as Religious.

The abbey was then governed by Jacques de la Cour, one of the successors of M. de Rancé, who had been dead two years. The Abbot was too prudent to admit two Brothers still clothed in the habit of their order without the permission of their Superior. He wrote to M. de la Salle, thereby giving him news, for the first time, of the missing disciples, about whom he had been full of anxiety. Blessed de la Salle wrote to the Abbot, telling him the reasons of

their departure, and entreating him not to admit them. The Abbot, of course, refused them. The two wanderers came back to their Superior, and the master of novices was sent to Chartres, where he died soon afterwards of a horrible disease which was looked upon by the whole community as the just punishment of his faults. His companion, in a short time, left the Brotherhood.

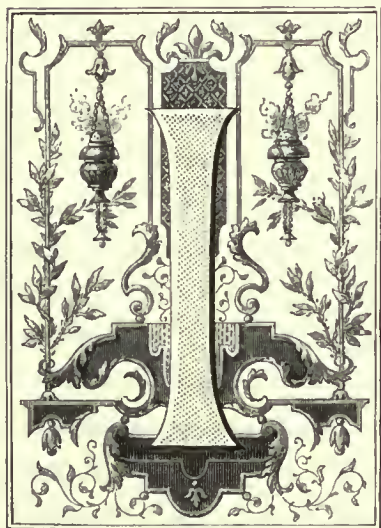




Door of the convent of the Dominican Nuns of the Cross, Rue de Charonne, opposite to where Blessed de la Salle went to reside in 1703 (p. 278). — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Cabarteux.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLESSED DE LA SALLE IN THE FAUBOURG SAINT-ANTOINE.



IT was in 1703 that Blessed de la Salle left the parish of Saint Sulpice to go to the faubourg Saint Antoine. He was only a tenant in the house of the Rue Vaugirard, and he felt all the inconveniences of this precarious situation. So much so, that a few days after his installation, he had a procession in the garden to implore of Almighty God to grant him a settled abode, at least for his novices.

All the Brothers walked in the procession, and he himself followed, wearing his surplice. They recited the little office of Our Lady, the Litanies, several Psalms and the *Memorare*. Their per-

severing prayer seemed for a moment to be granted. The large house was in every way suitable to their purpose; its position was good, and its extensive buildings afforded ample accommodation. The landlord urged them to buy it, and even promised to let them have it for forty five thousand francs, though it was well worth twice that sum. The opportunity was tempting, but how could one who had given all he possessed to the poor, and who was employing his last resources to feed his disciples, bring forward so considerable a sum? Suddenly Blessed de la Salle was informed that a charitable person had just left him the sum of fifty thousand francs; all difficulties seemed at an end, and it seemed as if he were about at last to carry out his project.

However, when he attempted to claim the money, new difficulties arose; the adverse influences that had so often opposed his projects were again powerful enough to prevent him from receiving the sum that was due to him, or rather God judged that an heroic act of resignation on the part of his servant, would be for the new-born Institute a firmer and more solid beginning than the acquisition of any house, however advantageous it might appear. The money bequeathed to him could not be obtained, and he found himself as poor and as embarrassed as he was before.

Meantime, the house occupied by the Brothers in the Rue de Vaugirard had been sold, and they were now obliged to leave it; but Blessed de la Salle, seeing himself and his numerous community absolutely without a shelter, without help or resources for the future, begged the new landlord to allow him to remain, until he could find another abode. The landlord, who was a good man, gave the required permission, but happily, at the end of six months, the holy founder discovered in the faubourg Saint Antoine, rue de Charonne, in front of the Convent belonging to the Dominican Nuns of the Cross, a house, with some drawbacks, it is true, but sufficiently large to lodge his community. On the 20th of August 1703, after having received the permission of the parish-priest of Saint Paul, in whose parish the house was situated, he took possession of his new home, hoping that by leaving the parish of

Saint Sulpice, where he had encountered so many difficulties, he might be forgotten by his enemies.

Not having asked leave to have a chapel in his own house, Blessed de la Salle said his daily mass, at which his community assisted, in the chapel belonging to the Dominican Nuns. The Nuns, struck by the sanctity of his demeanour and by the fervor with which he offered up the holy sacrifice, inquired his name and history, and soon interested themselves warmly in the welfare of his community. On hearing of the difficulties and the persecutions from which he had suffered, they strove, by their constant charity, to make him forget his past trials. For many years, they laid aside part of what they possessed for the benefit of the Brothers, and even the departure of the latter made no change in their friendship. When Blessed de la Salle went to Rouen, the alms of his benefactresses followed him; when, in 1709, the famine drove him back to Paris, he found them ever ready to assist him; their house was his constant resource; in moments of great want and distress, he would say cheerfully to the Brothers: "Let us go to 'la Croix;'" and he was never known to return thence empty handed.

On his side, he was able to render some services to the Nuns, several of whom, impressed by his sanctity, wished to place themselves under his spiritual direction. He resisted for some time, pleading his occupations and also his dislike to hearing the confessions of women, who generally found him a severe director; but at length he yielded, and his benefactresses were thus able to appreciate still more fully his deep knowledge of spiritual life, and the solidity of his piety.

He remained in the Rue de Charonne about a year and a half, during which time the Brothers of the other schools of the order in Paris used to come, according to their custom, and spend Sundays and holidays with the community.

In spite of his deep humility, the renown of Blessed de la Salle soon spread afar, beyond the limits of his parish. On one occasion the Governor of the Bastille sent to request him to hear the confession of a priest who was imprisoned for a crime against the

State. He immediately obeyed, and found the unhappy captive in a miserable condition, forgotten by all and clad in tattered garments, filled with vermin. Moved to tears of compassion, the servant of God lovingly clasped the prisoner in his arms, heard his confession, and reconciled him with his Redeemer. Then, he made him take off his soiled and ragged clothes, and put on his own in exchange, while he joyfully wrapped himself in his penitent's miserable rags, which he concealed under his large cloak. When he left the prison, his soul was full of joy at having relieved the representative of Him who has said : " I was naked, and you clothed me; I was a captive, and you visited me. "

In spite of his change of abode, the persecutions from which Blessed de la Salle had previously suffered, were, by God's permission, to follow him to the faubourg Saint Antoine. All the good works that had been founded in Rue de Vaugirard had been removed to the Rue de Charonne. There the novitiate was installed; there new schools were opened; there also a new Sunday-school was established. Again it was this school that served as a pretext for fresh attacks on the part of the writing-masters.

We have already related how, on his arrival in Paris in 1688, Blessed de la Salle had found himself in presence of two powerful communities who, after having for many years been at variance with each other, had at last come to divide the monopoly of public teaching — the school-masters and the writing-masters. At first the new foundation escaped observation; but as it grew and developed, it excited the jealousy of the school-masters, who, in 1688 and in 1699, obliged the servant of God to appear before the precentor, in order to justify himself. However their accusations fell to the ground as he proved successfully that the schools he had founded were simply and solely poor schools; moreover he was supported by the pastor of Saint Sulpice, whose powerful influence succeeded in defeating the efforts of his persecutors.

In 1703, when Blessed de la Salle removed to the faubourg Saint Antoine, the situation changed, and the proceedings against him were conducted with more policy and on a different system.

The school-masters on the one hand and the writing-masters on the other, forgetting their past differences, made common cause against the new Institute, and while the first summoned the servant of God to appear before the precentor, the second denounced him to the Lieutenant of police; thus he, who had a horror of litigation, found himself summoned before two tribunals, each of which possessed sufficient authority to destroy his work.

On the 7th of February 1704, while the Brothers were employed in teaching, two commissaries, accompanied by a sergeant, presented themselves at the house, and exhibited a written order of the Lieutenant of police, authorizing them to seize all the writing materials of the schools. In consequence, pens, paper, inkstands, the children's copy-books and even the sign placed over the entrance, were seized and left under the care of the Brothers themselves, to whom the sergeant gave strict orders not to touch any of the confiscated articles, and to whom he left a written paper ordering them to appear before the police court, in order to hear the sentence that condemned them to the confiscation of their furniture and also to a fine.

The Brothers were alarmed at these violent measures, but their founder continued his daily occupations as though nothing had occurred; the schools remained open, the children continued to receive instruction, and he would not even reply to the accusations brought forward against him.

The Lieutenant of police condemned him by default¹ to a fine of fifty francs and to the costs, and he was forbidden to receive any children whose parents were not of the poorest, or to give them any instruction above their condition.

He was condemned at the same time by the precentor to close his schools and pay fifty francs fine, and all the furniture was seized. The sentence of the precentor was only eight days anterior to that of the writing-masters. The two were evidently the result of a concerted attack. The servant of God was to be hunted down,

¹ Archives nationales, Y. 9413.

condemned by all the tribunals, driven from every shelter, declared incapable of teaching altogether, and forced to give up his undertaking.

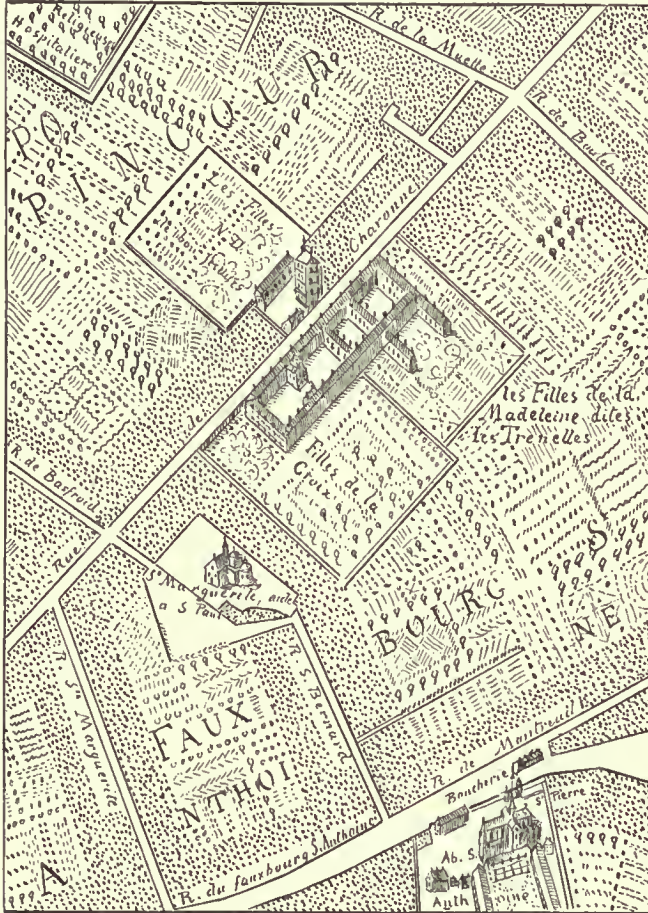
Blessed de la Salle was not more disturbed by the condemnation than he had been by the action against him. It is not on record whether or not he paid the fine; but the school was kept open. This, however, was only the beginning of his trials.

Other law-suits were at once instituted against him, and his enemies did not lay down their arms. But the servant of God was well equipped for fighting the good fight, and he fought on. His will was of iron, and his heart was of gold. As yet, the attacks had only been directed against the schools of the Rue de Charonne; but those of the faubourg Saint Marcel and Saint Sulpice were simultaneously threatened.

The entire life of Blessed de la Salle is, in truth, worthy of the deepest admiration. During the first centuries of the Church, we see the martyrs go down into the arena, and bare their breasts to the wild beasts, while they uttered that glorious death-cry that has resounded through the ages—“I am a Christian!” Perhaps, in the eyes of God who sees the secret of hearts, M. de la Salle’s virtues shone with as bright a lustre, though they were less dramatically manifested in the sight of men. To open schools in order to secure the salvation of thousands of Christian children, to be compelled to close them, and finally to triumph after the hardest and most prosaic trials—such was the life of the servant of God. May we not dare to say that it was in one sense as glorious as that of the martyrs?

In vain did the Brothers appeal against the last sentence given against their schools in the faubourg Saint Marcel and Saint Sulpice. The whole community was attacked, and Blessed de la Salle with it was condemned without appeal. The sentence was placarded in the public places throughout Paris; bailiffs, with hammers and ladders, arrived at the Rue de Charonne, the inscription over the door—“BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS”—was taken down; the benches, tables and books were seized; and

after six years of existence, even the Sunday-school was destroyed by the animosity of the writing-masters. Secular education had inaugurated its exploits. The servant of God at first took refuge in the parish of Saint Roch, where he assembled his novices, and tried to open a new school. He wandered from parish to parish,



Plan of the faubourg Salot Antoine, where the convent of the Dominioan Nuns, or Daughters of the Cross, stood ;
from Jouvin de Rochefort.

seeking some spot where he might place his work under shelter from the storm, but all in vain. The Saint Roch school did not last. It answered, however, as a temporary refuge where he was enabled to gather round him the remnants of his dispersed community, while he was looking out for a more stable asylum.

But the hardest trial, the sharpest grief was yet in store for him.

And it was to come from the Parliament, the Parliament to which the servant of God looked as to his last hope! On the 5th of February 1706, the terrible decree went forth : he was forbidden, he or any of the Brothers, to keep a single primary school in Paris or the Faubourgs, without the formal permission of the precentor. All seemed lost.

The holy man was pursued wherever he turned. The precentor condemned him, the Lieutenant of police condemned him, and Parliament confirmed the sentence; men who had till now been implacable enemies, grew reconciled in order to attack him, as formerly Herod and Pilate joined hands against Our Lord. He looked round him in vain for a friend, a protector, a powerful and upright judge. Paris, to whose education he had devoted himself, Paris coalesced to persecute him for the good he had been doing there. After fifteen years of futile efforts, he was forced to remove the centre of his Institute elsewhere.

But, in truth, it was already done. Providence was taking good care of a work that was to do such good service. The novitiate was no longer in Paris; it had been moved to Rouen six months before. But if the novitiate and the mother-house were gone, the schools remained, and they were to bear the brunt of the onset of all these triumphant adversaries. Their rage was directed above all against the schools of Saint Sulpice. It is true, these only existed as charity schools, and as such the parish-priest had a right to keep them and defend them, but his favourable sentiments towards Blessed de la Salle had undergone a change, and, taking advantage of this, the writing-masters continued to pursue the Brothers with endless vexations and threats of new fines and law-suits.

On hearing of these continual persecutions, the Holy Founder, who had removed to Rouen, returned to Paris to his former abode in the parish of Saint Roch. In addition to his mental trials and anxieties, he was just then suffering from a frightful tumour on one of his knees. An operation had been unsuccessfully performed in Rouen, and a fresh one became necessary on his return

to Paris. In the midst of the most severe suffering, his courage never failed, and he continued to recite his office with perfect calmness throughout the whole of the operation; suffering had become so familiar to him that the most agonizing pain had not the power to bring from him a word of complaint.

Meantime, the persecution against his Institute continued. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, far from defending the charity schools, which were placed as such under his authority, had, on the contrary, closed that situated in the Rue des Fossés-Monsieur-le-Prince, hoping thereby to disarm the animosity of the writing-masters. This concession only rendered them bolder and more over-bearing in their demands.

At last, the persecution became so fierce that Blessed de la Salle was obliged to allow the Brothers to leave the schools. One morning, therefore, the pupils, arriving at their usual hour, found the doors closed; at first they fancied this meant a holiday, but as time went on, and the Brothers did not reappear, the parents became anxious and went to seek the parish-priest to whom they represented that they were not rich enough to send their children to the paying schools, and that if the charity schools remained closed, their children must be deprived of any kind of instruction. M. de la Chétardie fully entered into their views, but he dared not oblige the Brothers to reopen their schools in the midst of the intrigues and persecutions directed against them by the writing-masters. He, therefore, sent for the latter and after having explained to them that it was he who had invited the Brothers to his parish and who had entrusted his schools to their direction, he added that he was resolved to maintain them at their post, as he had a right to do. Two notaries, who were present at the interview, drew up an official document, in which this declaration was embodied, and gave it to Blessed de la Salle that he might use it if further attacks were made against his Institute.

After three weeks' interruption, the schools were reopened, but their holy founder was destined to suffer fresh anxieties on their behalf. The times happened to be unusually hard; the Brothers

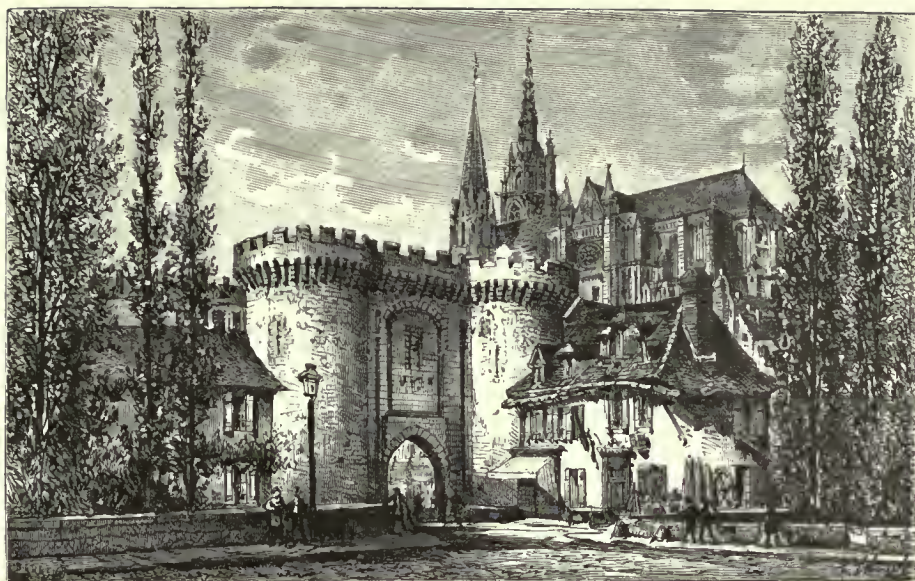
had no personal resources, and the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice paid them their allowance in notes upon the State, which just then were at a very low value, and could not be changed without considerable loss. Very soon Blessed de la Salle came to an end of the small sum thus allowed him, and in his distress he went to the parish-priest, who received him harshly, and declined to give him anything. This last trial seemed almost more than he could bear, and, in his discouragement and sadness, he reproached himself bitterly with having brought these sufferings upon his Brothers, who were personally loved and esteemed, and whose work was popular. It was his presence, he thought, that drew down these humiliations and trials on his disciples.

He turned to God as his only refuge, and went to make a retreat in the convent of the Carmelite Monks. He spent fifteen days there in prayer and solitude, and seeking in the Divine presence the strength he needed to carry on the fight, and to maintain his courage under the sufferings he had to undergo. Meantime, one of the Brothers, who was a favorite with M. de la Chétardie, went to see him, and described to him in such moving terms the true condition of the community that the pastor's heart was melted, and immediately he gave abundantly what was needed for the wants of the school; thus were the prayers of the holy founder heard, and the trial of famine spared him. But other trials now arose. No sooner had he come out of his retreat than persecution began afresh. We can hardly be surprised if the Brothers began to lose heart. They were not heroic enough to keep on battling against adversity as their saintly founder did. He did what he thought best for them; he called them from all the schools in the parish, and disseminated them throughout the different houses of the Institute.

The schools were thus closed, the Director of each house alone remained to explain to all enquirers the cause of this break up. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, wishing to save the schools from destruction, tried to find other masters, and having failed, implored the Brothers to return. Their founder was too gentle

and forgiving to refuse his consent; they therefore returned to Saint Sulpice; ten were appointed to teach in the schools, one was to take charge of the temporal administration of the house, and another of its general government. Early in October, after the schools had reopened, M. de la Chétardie sent his curate, M. Languet de Gergy, with directions to take down the names, ages and abode of each pupil, and the condition of their parents. It was decided, moreover, that the Brothers could not receive a pupil unless he brought a ticket of admission given to him by the parish authorities. The school-masters had no further excuse for interference, and the Brothers resumed their labors in peace.





Old gate at Chartres. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Méaulie.

CHAPTER IX.

SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCES (1699-1703)



WHILE Blessed de la Salle was being persecuted by all the powers of this world; while his benefactors were forsaking him, and the school-masters and the writing-masters were coalescing to shut up his schools; while Parliament was condemning him not to teach; while his own sons were rebelling against him, his work was spreading all over France, and schools were being opened in town after town. It seemed as if every blow struck

at the heart of the man of God was like the wound made by the plough-share in the bosom of the earth before the seed, which is

to be one day its wealth, is dropped into it. The number of his foundations might be reckoned by the number of his sorrows.

In 1699, the school-masters took an action against him; the same year, he founded the school of Chartres. The next year he founded one at Calais; and at Rheims, where he gave all his goods to the poor, he bought in a house which would seem to be the first held by the Institute as its own property.

The years 1702 and 1703 witnessed his long conflict with the Archbishop; they also saw the foundation of the schools at Troyes and Avignon. Whilst in Paris he is stripped of his title of Superior, the Archbishop of Avignon calls the Brothers to his diocese, and the spectacle of their virtue, during three and twenty years, draws from the prelate a testimony which is to contribute afterwards to the recognition of the Institute by the Holy See. In this same year, Blessed de la Salle, accused of inclining towards heresy, sends the safest and oldest of his disciples to Rome, consenting to be deprived of his services for the rest of his life in order to have a living link between the Holy See and the Institute, a faithful representative who may at all times testify to his obedience and his faith, and place under the eyes of the Sovereign Pontiff the model of those schools that he wished only to open with his blessing.

The years 1704, 1705 and 1706 saw the persecution of the school-masters and the writing-masters; the Institute, shaken to its centre, seemed on the point of perishing. Meantime, schools are being founded at Marseilles, and the vexations that the servant of God has to endure in Paris compel him to fly to Rouen, where the mother-house takes a development that it never could have reached in Paris.

In 1706, the law-suits end in a hostile decree of the Parliament. The next year a new efflorescence of foundations bursts out in the southern provinces. Schools are opened at Mende, at Alais, at Valréas, at Grenoble.

What was the mysterious chain that linked these triumphs to these trials, and in what scales were the tears and heart-aches of

the founder weighed to be accounted worth such abundant blessings upon his work?



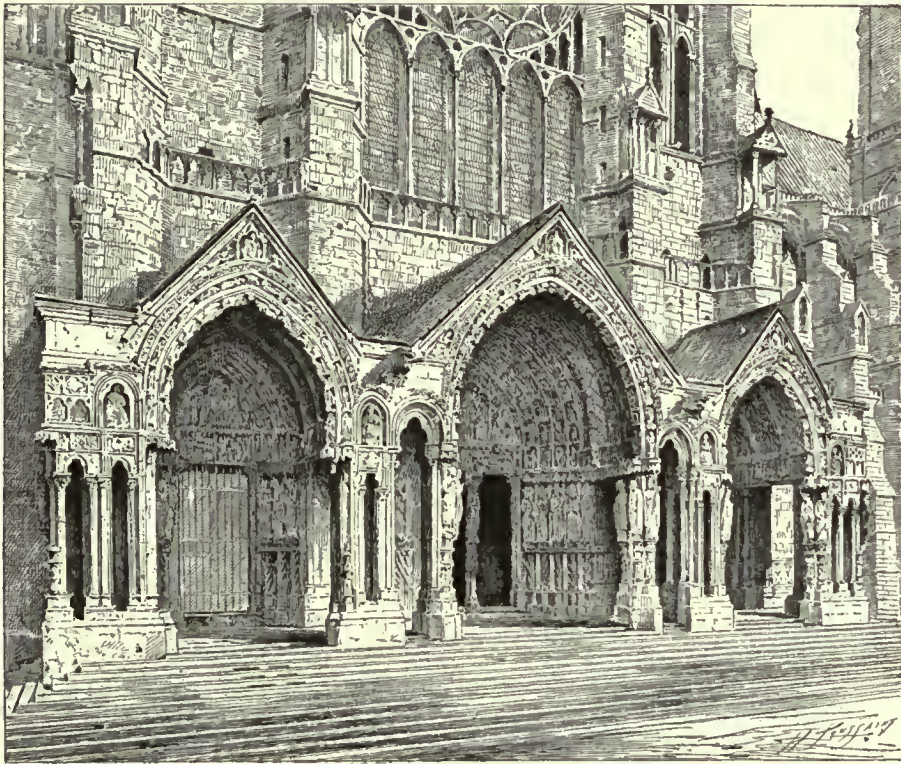
Monseigneur Godet des Marais (p. 291). — Engraved by Gusman, from a contemporary print.

These are mysteries which the eye of man can recognize, but into which it may not penetrate.

The Bishop of Chartres was the first prelate who invited the Brothers to come to his episcopal city. His predecessors had always shown great zeal for education. A synodal constitution of the year 1555 had laid down that "every parish was to have a public school to instruct the children, unless there was a priest or a cleric there sufficiently well informed to teach them familiarly the first letters, and to explain the Lord's prayer, the Creed and other things contained in the Alphabet." The parish-priests were charged to provide all that was necessary to these schools, which were kept up by the parishioners. It was they who named the masters. They were bound to visit the school once or twice a year, question the children and examine the books.

The clergy of the town of Chartres had taken these duties to heart. There were already school-mistresses for girls in the parishes of the city. The pastors were eager to have a similar establishment for boys, and they petitioned their Bishop to this effect. This document deserves to be reproduced, for it attests eloquently the zeal displayed by the clergy for the education of youth. "After having several times conferred together," said the parish-priests, "we are agreed that one of the chief causes of the indocility, the immodesty, the ignorance and visible immorality of the children of the town is owing to there being no free schools for the poor; or else because the masters and mistresses who have hitherto taught the poor, almost without any leave or knowledge of superiors, only doing it as a means of gaining their bread, have not acquitted themselves as they should for the advantage of the children, either from incapacity or want of zeal and application; that it becomes needful now to take serious steps to remedy this great evil, so that there may be in the city some few school-masters and mistresses— under your gracious orders— of whose capacity, piety and zeal there can be no doubt, and to whom we may entrust the care of youth; and above all, that there may be some free schools for the children of the poor, who for want of being able to pay masters, being neither taught nor kept at school, but wandering about and idling, become easily corrupted

and grow incorrigible. With this idea, and having heard that there is in Paris a priest of great piety who educates and trains for this office young men who have all the qualities necessary for filling it worthily, and that he gives them wherever they are asked for, provided their maintenance be secured, for which a very modest sum is sufficient, we felt it an obligation to have recourse



Chartres : front of the cathedral. — Drawn by H. Toussaint.

to your lordship to entreat you to use your influence, and even your alms, in order to procure for this town so powerful a help towards the reformation of the ills of the people. ”

The Bishop of Chartres was then M^{gr} Godet des Marais, who had known Blessed de la Salle at the seminary of Saint Sulpice, where he had himself been educated. Since that time, he had followed with interest the rise and growth of the Institute. Greatly preoccupied concerning the Christian education of youth, he had written as early as the year 1694 to beg the servant of God to give

him some Brothers. But having only a small number then, the latter could not comply with his request. The Bishop had repeated it several times at intervals, and in 1699, urged by the parish-priests, he wrote again, and more pressingly. Blessed de la Salle would not come to any decision without consulting the Brothers. He acquainted them with the desire of M^r Godet des Marais, and enlarged upon his zeal. They were of opinion that it would not be right to reject such an opportunity of doing good, and all volunteered to accept the mission. Blessed de la Salle selected from their number six of the most intelligent and zealous; he added a seventh Brother for the material service of the house, and the little colony went forth, as a swarm of bees takes flight from an overcrowded hive to build a new hive somewhere else.

The Bishop of Chartres took charge of all the expenses. But it was not enough to have masters, and to open schools, it was necessary to fill them and for this end to induce the parents to send their children there. The prelate, accordingly, on the 4th of October, issued a Pastoral letter instructing the parents on their duties, and announcing the opening of the schools for the 12th of the month. They were opened, and the children arrived in great numbers.

As long as M^r Godet des Marais lived, he felt the most tender solicitude for the Brothers of the Christian schools; he visited them frequently, made himself acquainted with their wants, provided for them, and was careful, above all, to moderate their ardor and austerity. "If you will not fatten the victim the better to immolate it, you ought at least to feed it and not overburden it with work and with an excessive load of austerities." In order to put this precept in practice, the worthy Bishop used to search for the instruments of penance made use of by the Brothers, and confiscate them.

He had no less esteem and affection for Blessed de la Salle, and when the latter came to Chartres to see the Brothers, he received him with all honor, and gave him pressing invitations to his table. Blessed de la Salle declined them with such persistent humility,

that one day, determined to overcome him, the Bishop had the doors of the palace locked, and so kept him a prisoner. The holy man, finding he could not get out, submitted with a good grace, and went in to dinner. Amongst the guests were M. d'Aubigné, Vicar general, afterwards Bishop of Noyon, and finally Archbishop of Rouen. After dinner, the Bishop and his Vicar attacked Blessed de la Salle about the severity of his Rule and the extreme poverty of his clothes. They criticized his thick shoes, his broad hat and his patched cloak. He defended himself with his wonted simplicity, and gave the reasons which had led him to frame the Rule as it stood. The shabbiness of his clothes was such, however, that the Bishop made him a present of a cloak, and to leave him no pretext for not accepting it, he had it made of the coarsest and commonest stuff. M. de la Salle took the gift humbly as an alms, and wore it; but not long after, as he was coming home one winter's night, he was accosted by robbers who took a fancy to the cloak, and he let them have it.

The schools of Chartres had prospered rapidly. The aspect and example of the Brothers, their gentleness, their devotedness, impressed the children, and disposed them to receive their lessons.

Blessed de la Salle needed, nevertheless, great perseverance and strength of soul to preserve the Rule intact amidst all the contradictions that assailed it. Wherever he presented it, he was met by particular views and traditions and prejudices. Thus the Bishop of Chartres did not at all approve of his teaching the children to read French before Latin. Latin was no longer the general language, as formerly, but it was still the language of educated people, and those who were entering on their studies, began by learning to read it. French came afterwards, as if it had been a dialect without a literature that was not worth while making a study of.

Blessed de la Salle held to his opinion. He showed that times were changed, that French was now the language universally spoken, necessary, and easy to learn. It was very easy to go on

from French to Latin, whereas it was difficult to begin with the latter, whose hard words were so much more unintelligible to children. If, as it often happened, the school studies were cut short before the time, those who had learned French at least carried away with them a little stock of knowledge, whereas, if they had only learned to read Latin without understanding it, and without having learned to read French, they had wasted their time. M^r Godet des Marais yielded to these arguments.

Poor, dear house of Chartres! God tried it severely. The Brothers suffered want and hunger there more than once. In 1705, an epidemic carried off a great many of them. They stayed at their post and fell, making no display, modestly heroic. And at Chartres, as in Paris, they had the plague of law-suits, that other epidemic. But, through God's grace, Blessed de la Salle and his Brothers came triumphantly out of them, and, in the long run, the Chartres foundation prospered.

The establishment of Calais was only a few months behind that of Chartres. Towards the end of 1699, a young ecclesiastic who was studying theology at the seminary of Bons-Enfants, M. Ponthon, nephew of the former Dean of Calais, saw one day the children of the Christian schools assisting at mass in the church of Saint Sulpice. He was struck by their recollection and their discipline, and enquired at once who were the masters that brought them up so well. As soon as he came to know the Brothers, he conceived a lively desire to endow his native town with one of their schools. He was about to succeed to the position of parish-priest of Calais on the resignation of his uncle, and he already held his future parish in affection. He wrote to his uncle about the school, and the latter bade him go and see Blessed de la Salle, and ask him for Brothers, promising to do all in his power to assist them in organizing the establishment.

The aldermen of the city, religious men, eager for the Christian education of youth, approved of the scheme. They wrote to M. de Béthune, governor of Calais, to obtain his consent. The latter, sincerely pious, and already well informed on the subject from an interview he had with Blessed de la Salle, not only consented to the foundation, but gave the Brothers a letter signed by himself and sealed with his arms, recommending them to the town in the warmest terms. M. Bignon, vice-governor of Picardy and Artois, declared himself their protector. Finally, the Bishop of Boulogne, M^{rs} Pierre de l'Angle, granted the necessary authorization.

Blessed de la Salle, yielding to all these advances, sent two Brothers, whose first act was to throw themselves at the feet of the Bishop, and ask his permission to teach Christian doctrine. The prelate granted the permission, and wrote a Pastoral, inviting the inhabitants of Calais to send their children to the schools.

The school opened, therefore, under the most favorable conditions. Priests and laymen vied with one another in supporting it. Thanks to M. Ponthon, it was even favored by gifts from the King, in 1701 and 1702.

The success of this foundation inspired several persons with the desire of making another one. There was a quarter at Calais called Court-Gain, quite isolated, and inhabited only by sailors—an honest population with a strong sense of religion at heart, but steeped in ignorance. The children from their tenderest age went out to sea, and fished, and no one troubled to teach them anything.

A zealous ecclesiastic, M. Leprince, who was chaplain of the district, wished very much to have a school there; but for this there wanted the ground, a house, Brothers, and funds to support them. Charity compassed all these wants.

The aldermen of the city, together with the parish-priest, wrote to M. de Pontchartrain for the concession of a square situated in Court-Gain, where there was a guard-house. They obtained it. The chancellor himself wrote to the Dean on the 4th of May 1703—

" I explained to M. Bignon the intentions of His Majesty regarding the Brothers of the Christian schools for the instruction of the children of the sailors at Court-Gain. You have only to apply to him; he will provide all they want." Blessed de la Salle hastened to despatch two Brothers. The King granted them an annual pension of one hundred and fifty francs, afterwards increased to three hundred, and which was paid until his death.

The success of the sailors' school was no less complete than that of the children of the town. Blessed de la Salle's name was in veneration there. He went to this school for the first time in 1716, and was received with great honor by a pious layman, M. Gence, who took advantage of having him at table to get his portrait taken unknown to him, the painter being hidden behind the tapestry. On discovering the trick, the holy man's humility was deeply wounded.

M. Gence had a large fortune. He had never married, and placed all his means at the service of religion. He labored, above all, at the conversion of Protestants; but he had a great zeal also for the work of the Brothers. " You are husbandmen in the field of the father of the family," he would say to them, " and if you were not called in at first to work there, you are at last called to clear away the most neglected part. You are gleaners who follow in the track of the reapers, to pick up here and there the ears that were strewn about, forgotten and trampled under foot. If you do not go up to the altar, or ascend into the pulpit, if you do not enter the confessional or the baptistry; if your functions do not put the thurible into your hand to offer incense to the Most High in His temple, you have at least the honor of preparing for him living temples, and of laboring for the sanctification of neglected and forsaken youth. You fill the office of the Apostles, who gladly laid aside every other employment of their ministry to give themselves up individually to prayer and the preaching of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. "

Noble words, and well worthy of being quoted alongside of so many others in praise of the pious laymen of the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries. M. Charles de Ribbe found nothing finer in his "books of reason." This is saying a great deal in a few words.

The Troyes school dates from 1703. Nuns had long been entrusted in this town with the education of girls, and the clergy took charge of that of the boys. Before 1703 there were free schools for both sexes in all the parishes; but here, as elsewhere, the great difficulty was to find proper masters.

In 1702, a pious lady bequeathed to the parish-priest of Saint Nizier, M. le Bey, an annuity of two hundred francs to establish a charity school. The latter at once bethought him of the Brothers, and begged Blessed de la Salle to send him some. An annuity of two hundred francs was not enough for two, if their board and lodging was to be paid for out of it. The holy man entreated the parish-priest, who resided at the little seminary, of which he was superior, to give them up his presbytery. The parish-priest consented, and the contract was at once drawn up. The Brothers arrived in 1703, and immediately opened the school. For seven years they remained at the presbytery, and subsisted on two hundred francs a year, as their sole income.

In 1710, the successor of M. le Bey could not let them keep on in the presbytery, and they had to look out for another house. Their small allowance now became quite insufficient; but they were loved, and many persons came to their assistance. The Bishop, M. Bouthillier de Chavigny, had taken them under his wing, and was full of zeal for the schools; he could not fail to love the disciples of Blessed de la Salle.

In 1703, the Institute took root in Languedoc and Provence. It was the moment when the persecution against the holy founder was at its height in Paris. Providence, while striking him with one hand, consoled him with the other, and trials were the instruments that fashioned his future prosperity. For him, as formerly for the apostles, persecution, while scattering his flock and compelling him to fly, led him at the same time to carry the seed of his Institute with him wherever he went, and, in wandering from town to town, he planted schools.

In the year 1702, M. Jean Pierre de Madon, lord of Château-Blanc, treasurer of the Pope at Avignon, wished to found a charity school in that town. His wife in dying bequeathed to him six thousand francs for this purpose, but he knew not how to carry out her pious intention. Here, as everywhere, masters were wanting. He was searching for some on all sides, when a gentleman from Lyons told him of Blessed de la Salle's Institute. M. de Château-Blanc wrote at once to ask him for two Brothers.

The holy man hesitated. He feared that his children, removed far from him into a country surrounded by heretics, might lose the love of their Rule, and be influenced by the seductive atmosphere of error. While he was hesitating, one of the Brothers whom he had sent to Rome returned, and was passing by Avignon. M. de Château-Blanc heard of this, and intercepted him, and was so charmed with him that he wrote again to Blessed de la Salle, and with such earnestness that there was no resisting the appeal any longer.

M. de la Salle sent two Brothers. M. de Château-Blanc lodged them while their own house was being prepared, and added to the sum already given to them, so that they might be in want of nothing. The first thing the Brothers did on arriving was, as usual, to throw themselves at the feet of the Archbishop, M^r Maurice de Gontery, to ask his authorization and his blessing. The Archbishop received them with the greatest kindness, granted them all they desired, and the school was opened in 1703.

It was soon so flourishing that the two Brothers were not enough. M. de Château-Blanc wrote to Blessed de la Salle in 1705 to ask him for another. The town, he said, was greatly edified by his disciples, and the vice-legate was so pleased with them that he showed it at every opportunity. But their number must be augmented. God would provide for their wants : “ I have no doubt but that He will, for this work of charity is the most needed of any in our town. I hope, sir, that you will come and judge for yourself, and that we shall have the happiness of seeing you. ”

The new Brothers were sent. The vice-legate, by order of Pope Clement XI., and the Archbishop, undertook to support them. The latter prelate took the liveliest interest in the schools; he went frequently to visit them, passed whole hours there assisting at the classes and questioning the children, stimulating their emulation, sending for them to his palace, and hearing them recite their catechism.

The Avignon Brothers kept two schools : “ one for the larger and more advanced boys, where they learned to read, write and cypher, and one for the smaller and more backward children, who only learned to read. Every day they went to mass, and the Brothers explained Christian doctrine to them; on Sundays and holidays they took them to high mass and vespers in the parish, and gave them further lessons in catechism.

The schools were established in a house bought by M. de Château-Blanc, in the parish of Saint Pierre, in the quarter of Puits-de-la-Reine. They were very far from the Rhône, near which a great many artisans lived. Another school was, therefore, founded by and by in this new quarter, with the assistance of the town and the Sovereign Pontiff.

The Holy See, kept informed by the Archbishop, was in sympathy with the Brothers. The Archbishop gave them, in 1720, a certificate stating that “ since they had been settled in the town, they had always filled their office with great zeal and assiduity; that the public were greatly benefitted by their efforts

to bring up the children in a Christian way, and that their modesty and the purity of their lives had always been a source of edification. ”

This testimony contributed powerfully to the recognition of the Institute by the Holy See.

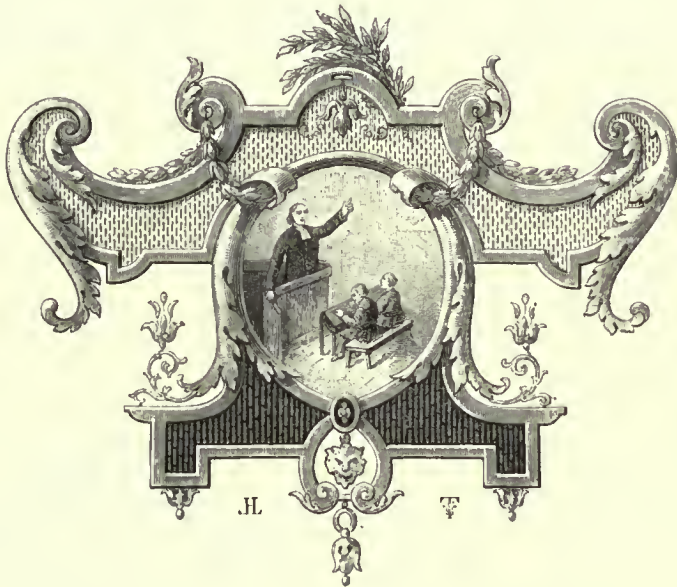
We cannot speak of the schools in the provinces without coming back to Rheims, which had been their cradle. After the departure of Blessed de la Salle, the seminary for the country school-masters had been dispersed, and the little seminary had been brought back to Paris; but the schools remained, and the ill-will manifested towards them at first had given way to more just sentiments. The relatives, the former brethern, the friends of M. de la Salle became interested in his work, and lent their assistance to establish it on a solid basis.

On the 14th of August 1700, Blessed de la Salle, conjointly with his brother Louis, M. Claude Pepin, canon of the cathedral, and another priest, M. de la Val, purchased a house where the Brothers kept a school and which is situated at the entrance of Rue Neuve, opposite the convent of Saint Claire. This purchase cost them nine hundred and fifty francs. The following year they bought two more houses next to this one, and drew up a deed to explain their intentions. It was agreed that these houses should be purchased to lodge the Brothers and keep their schools, without their heirs being able to make any claim on them. In the event of the death of one of them, the survivors were to choose a partner who would become co-proprietor with them. Even the event of the Brothers giving up their work was foreseen, and in that case the property was to pass to the country school-mistresses of the free schools.

This arrangement lasted for long years, even after the death of Blessed de la Salle. The co-proprietors died off one after another,

but the survivors always provided successors to them, and in 1725 one of his nephews and heirs, Pierre de la Salle, named two other canons to be co-proprietors with him of the houses that belonged to the schools.

Such a success was in a measure the result of Christian prudence, but far more and above all of God's blessing.





Rome ; Saint Peter's. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget ; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER X.

THE SCHOOL IN ROME.



BLESSED de la Salle wished to have a school near the Holy See, in order that the Sovereign Pontiff might judge of his work, bless it if he found it good, and grant him right of citizenship in the Church. Modest as were his resources, few as were his disciples, he nevertheless decided on sending two of them to Rome, and he chose for the carrying out of this mission Gabriel Drolin, one of the two who took the vow of stability with him in 1691. To Gabriel he joined his brother Gerard Drolin.

The two new missionaries set out in 1700. Brother Gerard fell

ill, and was obliged to return to France the following year; Brother Gabriel Drolin continued to pursue his mission in Rome. He remained there more than a quarter of a century, far from his spiritual father, from his community, exposed to all sorts of temptations, but pursuing faithfully the mission he had received which was to obtain the papal approbation for his Institute.

Things did not go smoothly, and Brother Drolin encountered many difficulties, some coming from persons, some from the customs of the country, others, finally, from want of means. Months went by before it was possible to establish anything, and Blessed de la Salle kept writing him letter after letter to stir up his zeal and support his courage:— “ Pray constantly that God may do with you as He pleases. You must be wholly abandoned to His guidance and to His holy will, and you must do nothing without His counsel.” Brother Drolin and the Institute were both so poor that he was informed one day as a piece of good news that a pious lady had promised to buy him a habit.

In spite of the expedients to which he was driven, Brother Drolin did not lose sight of the foundation of a school, and M. de la Salle never ceased urging him about it. He succeeded at last. A Christian family gave him his meals out of charity; but he did not live in their house, and he spent his days teaching. Blessed de la Salle congratulates him, and offers to send him books; but one sees in his letters that the spirit of prudence keeps constantly restraining him:— “ I don't wish to go forward in anything; and I will not go forward in Rome more than anywhere else; Providence must take the first step, and I shall be content when I see that I am acting under His dictates. I shall then have nothing to reproach myself with, whereas, when I undertake a thing, it is always I, and I never expect much good to come of that, unless God gives it a large blessing.”

However, the Roman school was founded, and Brother Drolin had informed Blessed de la Salle of the event. It held on for several years, poor, but still flourishing. In 1706, it was approved, and on the 12th of May of that year, Blessed de la Salle begged

Brother Drolin to let him know the exact date of the patents. It had taken four years of efforts and entreaties to obtain them. Meantime, the school prospered. The children were numerous, and Blessed de la Salle was happy about it.

Brother Drolin was overladen with work. He was alone to keep this large school, to represent the Brothers in Rome, and to make known the Institute to high ecclesiastical personages. Under this burden his health broke down, and he fell very ill. It was to be feared also that his love for the interior life might grow cold from lack of time to devote himself to prayer. M. de la Salle reminds him of this¹: "It is about eight days since I received your letter, my very dear Brother; I was greatly distressed about your illness, and I rejoice that God has restored you to health. I also have been very ill this last week, not being able to walk; but I am now much better. I was much surprised not to have news of you, and this troubled me. What I mean to do is to send you a Brother by the end of this summer, for I want badly to let you have more rest, and more time to apply yourself to meditation. Yet I don't know what there is to prevent your doing this. Pray Our Lord to bless His work."

The intention of sending another Brother to Rome was not carried out, either for want of the money, or for want of the Brother. M. de la Salle did all he could, meantime, to cheer and sustain Brother Drolin: he kept him informed of all that passed in the community; he asked him for his prayers, and assured him of his, and did his best to prevent loneliness and distance making the absent one feel that he was outside the family circle.

Brother Drolin's trials were manifold. Money above all was wanting, and it seems that, in order not to starve, Brother Drolin had to go into a private house, probably the one where he had first received hospitality. Blessed de la Salle was uneasy at this, and in 1708 he writes to him: "Tell me if you are in the same place, and if you are not on the look-out for something else.

¹ Letter, April 1st 1705.

I pray Our Lord to fill you full of His spirit, and to do with you as it pleases Him. ”

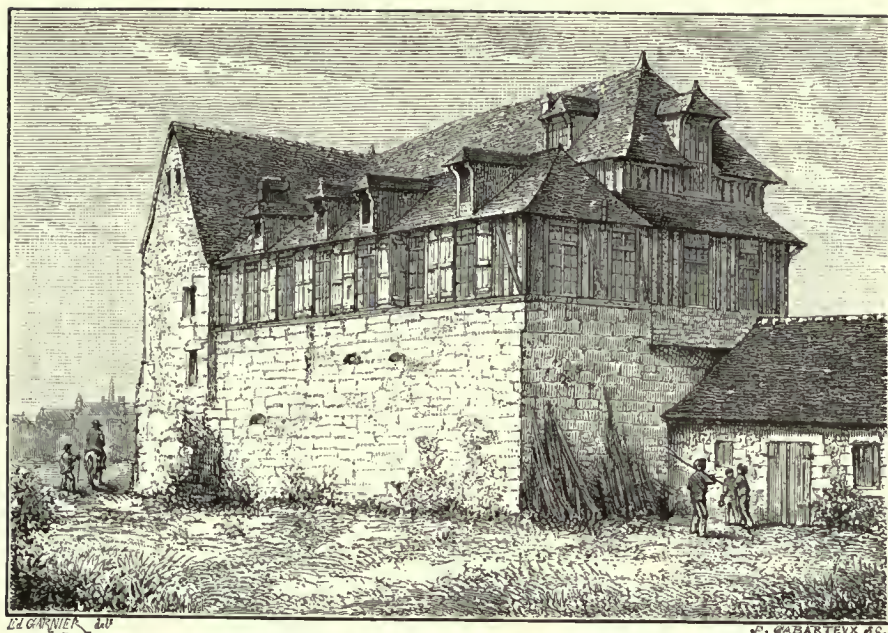
Such persevering prayer could not remain sterile. Brother Drolin ended by obtaining a school from the Pope, and, in order to manage it, he left M. de la Bussière's house, on which Blessed de la Salle joyfully congratulates him : “ This is what I sighed for. I know there is work to be done where you are now, and I rejoice that you have a good number of scholars. ” And the holy man blesses God.

Brother Drolin, sustained by the advice of his absent father, was enabled to stand firm in his duty, and faithful to his Rule, and to live for eight and twenty years away from his community without faltering in his vocation. A great number of the letters written to him by Blessed de la Salle are lost; but those that remain are sufficient to enable us to appreciate the spirit that breathed from all.

Those written towards the end bear especially the stamp of an unbounded confidence : “ It was not my will that has kept me so long without writing to you, ” he writes in 1716; “ I assure you I have a very tender affection for you, and I often pray to God for you. ”

Brother Drolin never again saw Blessed de la Salle in this life. He remained in Rome till 1728, and only returned to France seven years after his holy protector had gone to his rest in the Lord. He remained for a quarter of a century the representative of his community in Rome; the Sovereign Pontiff judged of the master by the disciple, and of the entire work by that little school which excited the admiration of the Romans themselves, accustomed as they are to the marvellous achievements of sanctity and genius.

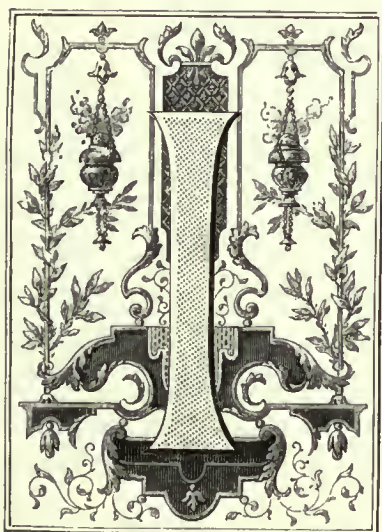
Brother Drolin died in 1733, in the community of Auxonne, in the diocese of Besançon.



Rouen. — House called "The Rampart," attached to the old Hospital where the Brothers taught the children of the said Hospital (p. 316). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Cabarteux.

CHAPTER XI.

WORK IN ROUEN (1705).



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IN 1705, Blessed de la Salle was called to Rouen. The education of children had not been so neglected in this town as in many others. Normandy was one of the most advanced provinces of France, and the town of Rouen, in particular, contained a number of charitable persons who were striving actively to procure for the poor the benefits of Christian instruction.

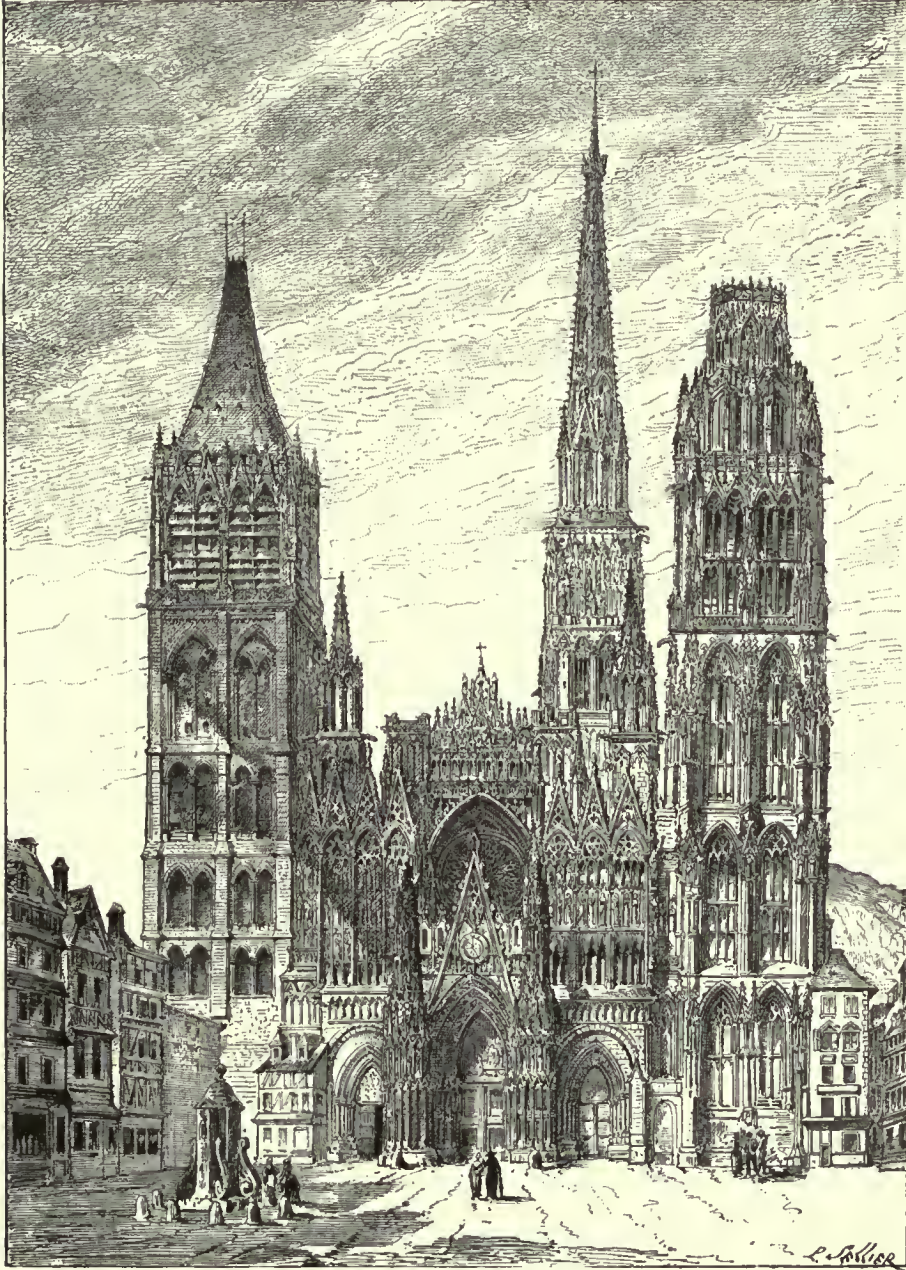
There was in Rouen a very ancient charitable administration called Office of the poor who were not sick, "*les pauvres valides*." It was a committee composed of members of the magistracy, the

clergy and the municipality, who met every week to consult about the wants of the poor, like our Offices of relief. Their funds were collected from voluntary contributions of the town's people, fines, collections in the churches, gifts and legacies. They distributed alms to the poor on certain days, put children out to nurse, and performed miracles of energy in fighting against misery and alleviating it. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, this committee changed its character, and turned into something like our hospital committees of the present day. Men of good will, belonging to the best families in the town, gave up every other occupation, and took up their abode in the general hospital, in the midst of the poor, in order to minister to them. Such were at this period the two brothers Bimorel, one of whom was the treasurer of France, and the other canon of the Metropolitan Church and councillor of Parliament.

The Office had not overlooked the education of poor children. As early as 1555, it had purchased, in different quarters of the towns, four houses where four priests were to teach poor children "to fear and praise God, the Creed and the Commandments of the law, their little book, reading, writing, and above all good behaviour." The four masters charged with this mission were lodged, and received each fifty francs salary. Charitable persons had provided funds for the maintenance of these schools. They held on more or less satisfactorily for a century. Their number diminished, however, and towards the year 1655 there was only one left. Just at this date the Office turned the schools into a sort of refuge where poor children, boys and girls, from the age of eight, were taken in and formed to piety, and taught to read and write, and were employed in divers kind of works and trades. A school similar to that of the general hospital was founded at the same time. Two priests were charged with the Christian instruction, and a writing-master came, at a salary of fifty-four francs, to teach reading and arithmetic.

The number of children taken in and taught in this way was necessarily restricted, and varied according to the means of the

Office. But outside these houses, a great number of children were deprived of every kind of instruction. Struck by this state



Rouen : the Cathedral. — Drawn by Sellier.

of things, M. Laurent de Bimorel undertook to restore the district schools.

Then it was that M. Nyel appeared on the scene. In 1657, he was employed, at a salary of a hundred francs, to instruct the little boys of the Office in the rudiments of Christian doctrine, to teach them to read and write. A little later, he interests himself in the children when they are put out to serve their time as apprentices, or get placed as servants. M. de Bimorel found M. Nyel a precious auxiliary for the re-opening of the district schools. From 1661 to 1669 they were opened in divers parts of the town, first in the parish and the cemetery of the church of Saint Maclou, then in the church and cemetery of Saint Vivien, then in the Gobelin tower for the Beauvoisin district, then at Darnetal, Saint Sever and elsewhere. From the time of their first establishment until their restoration towards the middle of the seventeenth century, the popular charitable schools of Rouen were in the hands of ecclesiastics. But it was impossible to find amongst the clergy a succession of men willing to devote themselves to these lowly functions, and to renounce for the rest of their lives positions much more in keeping with their habits and education. The school died out for want of masters.

Then came the Brothers instituted by M. Nyel, but this institution lacked foundations, and so declined rapidly after the death of its founder. The Brothers grew tired and fell away from the work, and subjects could not be found to fill up the vacancies made by death or change in their ranks. Various expedients were resorted to, but without success; every effort failed, and the schools of Rouen were falling to pieces.

Then it was that Blessed de la Salle was appealed to. A school had been founded by M. Laurent de Bimorel in 1670 at Darnetal, a manufacturing village at the gates of Rouen, and was kept up by the members of the Congregation of Our Lady, established at the Jesuits'. One of these latter, Abbé Deshayes, who later became parish-priest of Saint Sauveur at Rouen, had been with M. de la Salle at Saint Sulpice, and was acquainted with his work. The Darnetal school-master being dead, Abbé Deshayes gave such an account of Blessed de la Salle's community, that the members

all agreed to ask for Brothers to carry on the school. M. Deshayes wrote to Abbé Chardon de Lagny, of the community of Saint Sulpice, and begged him to negotiate the matter. The holy founder did not reject the proposal.

They offered the Brothers the modest sum of one hundred and fifty francs a year— this was not enough to live upon. Nevertheless, Blessed de la Salle accepted, Darnetal was the first seat of M^{me} de Maillefer's and M. Nyel's schools; and he held to founding his there. He sent a Brother to examine the house that was offered to him; it was suitable and near the Church, so he consented to give two Brothers. He stipulated, however, that they were not to be taken from the work of the schools. The village school-masters were often employed by the pastor in the inferior offices of the church; they wore the surplice, chaunted at the choristers' desk, and did duty as sacristans. These occupations were calculated to interfere with the Rule of the Brothers, and their founder could not tolerate such an abuse. The Darnetal school was opened in 1705. In a short time, it was so flourishing and so largely attended, that its fame reached the ears of the Archbishop, who set his heart on having one like it in the episcopal town.

At Rheims, Blessed de la Salle had had to struggle against the opposition of his family. In Paris, he had had to overcome the jealousy of a fraction of the clergy. At Rouen, he was destined to come into collision with the inveterate routine and the parsimoniousness of a charitable body who, after systematically repulsing the Brothers, now sought to get as much work out of them with as little pay as possible, never stopping to consider whether the willing laborers would not break down under the burden. Thus, on every side, was his work to be strengthened by contradiction. But as God never fails to put the means close to the obstacles, Blessed de la Salle met at Rouen two powerful protectors by whose aid he succeeded in triumphing over all difficulties. One was the Archbishop; the other, M. Camus de Pont-Carré, First President of Parliament.

The Archbishop of Rouen at the time was M^{gr} de Colbert, son

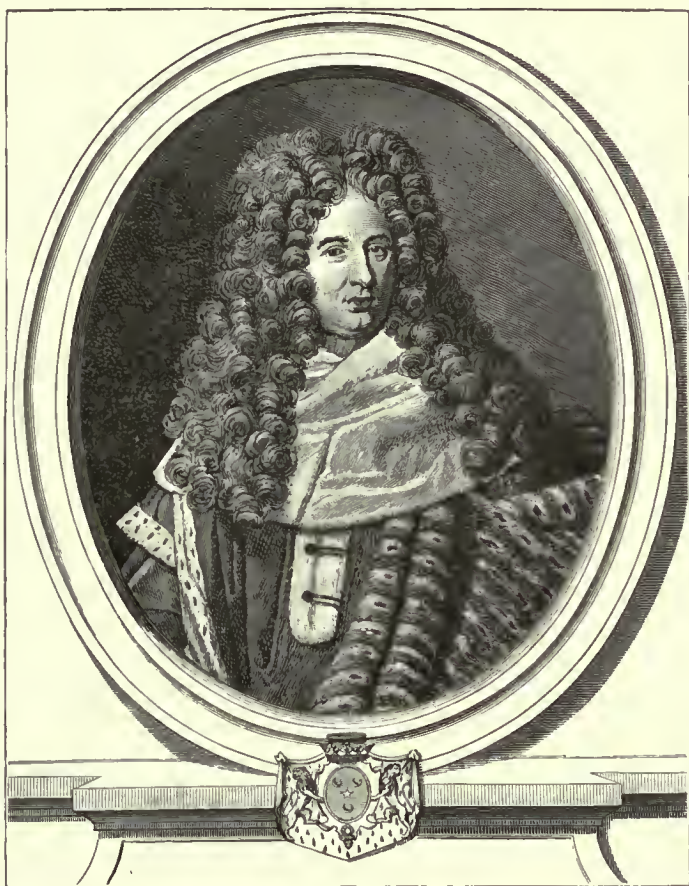
of the minister, Doctor of the Sorbonne, member of the French Academy, and one of the founders of the Academy of Inscriptions



Jacques-Nicolas Colbert, Coadjutor, then Archbishop of Rouen, from a print of the period.
— Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Chapon.

and Letters. Heir to the immense library of his father, he had also inherited his taste for study, and was a patron of learning. As regarded Jansenism, he had not always been as firm as he ought,

and at the clerical Assembly of 1706, had gone so far as to declare that the constitutions of the Popes were not binding on the Church until after they had been accepted by the body of the clergy. Fénelon, however, whose *Maxims of the Saints* Mgr de Colbert had



M. Camus de Pont-Carré, First President of the Parliament of Rouen, friend of Blessed de la Salle, from a print of the period. — Engraved by Méaulle.

condemned some years before, pleaded so earnestly in Rome on behalf of the prelate's good intentions, that the Pope refrained from condemning him. In his diocese, Mgr de Colbert was extremely charitable, and devoted himself to the education of the people until his death, which occurred in 1707.

He had been very zealous about the primary schools, and had founded a community of Mistresses at Ernemont. Hearing of the

good the Brothers were doing at Darnetal, he felt inclined to hand over to them the free schools of the town, and begged Blessed de la Salle to come and talk over this grave question with him. M. de la Salle saw the Archbishop, accepted with alacrity his overtures, and at once set out to Paris, in order to arrange the affair.

The free schools of Rouen, founded by M. Nyel, were then administered by the "Office of the Hospital" which found the funds and appointed the masters. Although the Archbishop was President of the Assembly, he had some trouble in bringing the members round to his views. He knocked against a number of prejudices; but, fortunately, he was ably supported by M. de Pont-Carré, whose eloquence overcame all resistance.

Blessed de la Salle was invited to come with the Brothers to take possession of the schools confided to his charity. This good news was brought to him by M^{rs} de Colbert in person, he having returned to Paris.

The servant of God was ready. He set out, travelling on foot with his disciples, like the Apostles, sleeping at the inns, and everywhere following the Rule. The pious wayfarers excited admiration and astonishment wherever they passed. People wondered who these men were who walked in silence, grave and recollected, wearing such a strange costume, and whose first care at nightfall, on reaching the inn, was to find a quiet room where they could say their prayers and remain undisturbed in the presence of God.

But by the time they reached Rouen, the sentiments of the administrators of the Hospital had changed. They would have nothing to do with the Brothers. Fortunately, the Archbishop soon returned, and came to the rescue. He called a meeting of the administrators, and everything was made right.

One Brother was to be charged with the school of Saint Godard, and the other with the little school of Saint Maclou. On the 26th of May, the first Brother was put at the head of the large school in the latter place, in order that the progress of the children, who

passed successively from one school to the other, might enable all to form an opinion as to the value of a method which differed from any that had been hitherto employed. The experiment was, apparently, considered to have answered; for, two months later, a demand was made for a third Brother to manage the school of Saint Vivien, and then a fourth for that of Saint Eloi.

The success was, in fact, so marked that the writing-masters took fright. Following the lead of their Paris colleagues, they resolved to check the growth of this new community, whose competition was so dangerous. The Brothers had arrived in the month of May. Three or four months later, the writing-masters addressed a complaint to the administration, setting forth that these Brothers received scholars of all conditions, without inquiring whether they were poor or not, thus doing a great injury to the writing-masters, and condemning two hundred men to starvation. The administrators did not pay much attention to these complaints. They contented themselves with sending on the address to the Commissaries of the districts, and telling them to take care that the children who went to the Brothers should first be provided with a certificate of poverty, delivered by the parish-priest. The matter dropped for some time, and the Brothers continued to work on unmolested.

They lived at the Hospital, and took their meals there. They overlooked the meals of the poor, and served them before sitting down to table themselves. They instructed the children of the Hospital, and went out to teach in the four large district free schools. However great their zeal and untiring their energy, four or five men were not equal to this amount of sustained work, and they were doomed to break down under it, unless they were relieved.

For some time past, Blessed de la Salle had been thinking of removing his Novitiate from Paris, where it was the object of incessant persecution. Seeing how favorably the Institute was regarded by the ecclesiastical authorities of Rouen, he thought he might find rest there, and consulted the Archbishop, whose advice

he valued. The prelate, who had come to appreciate fully the worth of the Institute, was delighted at the idea of having its cradle established in his diocese, and gave a ready assent to M. de la Salle's proposal. This was one of the happiest days in the holy founder's life.

A little way out of the town, at the end of the faubourg Saint Sever, was an old house built in the monumental style, with vast out-houses, and gardens walled in and planted with trees. On crossing the threshold of the place, you felt yourself transported into another world. The noise of the town expired at the entrance of this solitude, and nothing disturbed its peace. Here man was alone with God, and could give himself up to meditation and prayer uninterruptedly. One of the last owners of this vast property had built a chapel there, and dedicated it to St Yon, the disciple of St Denis, and a martyr. It had finally fallen to the inheritance of Mme de Louvois, sister-in-law of the Archbishop of Rheims, who, not wishing to inhabit it, wanted to let it. A community of Benedictine Nuns from the monastery of Saint Amand, at Rouen, took it in 1691, and enlarged the chapel. Blessed de la Salle, having visited it, found it admirably adopted to his purpose. The Nuns consented to cede it to him. In order not to give the alarm to his adversaries, he went privately to Mme de Louvois, and informed her of his intention. This lady, who was well acquainted with the virtues of the holy man, felt herself honored in being able to help on his designs, and gave him a lease of six years at a nominal rent of four hundred francs.

Blessed de la Salle took possession of the house without delay. He sent down his furniture, the novices went after it, accompanied by a few priests who had thrown in their lot with his, and by the end of August 1705 the Novitiate was installed.

M^r de Colbert had given M. de la Salle the most extensive faculties, and the servant of God had appointed as masters of novices Brother Bartholomew, one of the most pious and competent members of the community.

The holy man took advantage of this quiet home to renew the

spirit of his much tried disciples by a retreat. During the school-holidays, he sent for them from their various abodes, and for eight days, assisted by the priests who had accompanied him, he inflamed their fervor by his exhortations, and by the example of his fidelity in the observance of the Rule.

Whatever be the humility of the Saints, the good they do cannot long remain hidden. The fame of the virtues of Blessed de la Salle and his disciples was noised abroad, and it began to be said that such men ought not to confine their influence to the charity schools, that their care of childhood should have a wider scope, and that they ought to take in boarders at Saint Yon.

The holy founder never refused to do good when the opportunity was presented to him. He took in the children whose families had great difficulty in keeping them at home, he put them under the direction of an experienced Brother, with rules suited to their age and condition, and soon obtained results that amazed the parents.

This skill which he displayed in the education of youth inspired some persons with the desire of confiding to him children that were hard to manage, and who could not be made amenable to ordinary treatment. He accepted these too. They were submitted to a stricter discipline, and as, at that age, defects have seldom struck deep roots, but generally result from dissipation and too much liberty, the example of other children, well-behaved and happy, the pure country air and the salutary influence of religion soon got the better of their hitherto insubordinate natures.

There were, besides these young rebels, others of a different stamp, vicious boys, bad in grain, and for whom it was necessary to call in the severity of the law. Blessed de la Salle did not recoil even before this ungrateful task. He consented to receive the lads, and set apart a certain portion of the house for them; here, if they did not become converted, at least they were prevented from growing still more corrupt by contact with hardened criminals. These children were only shut up on an order from the First President, and at the request of their parents. Later on,

it became necessary to obtain *lettres de cachet* (a sealed order), and these were only delivered in case of moral depravity, or insanity.

Hard to manage as these new inmates were, they soon began to feel the effects of the salutary discipline under which they lived, and the results were marvellous. Several young fellows who had been considered incorrigible were touched by grace. Some went back home, and led exemplary lives which caused their early scandals to be forgotten. Others asked to receive the habit, or left the house of detention to enter monasteries, and expiate the disorders of their youth by prayer and penance.

There were, therefore, at Saint Yon, without counting the Novitiate and the Brothers, three distinct establishments— the boarders who were being taught reading, writing and arithmetic, or higher sciences, such as drawing, geometry and architecture; the unmanageable children who needed particular treatment for their temper and behaviour; and lastly the “ enclosed ones,” who were submitted to a penitential treatment. These communities all lived side by side without coming in contact with each other. They occupied separate parts of the vast building, and so great was the order which reigned throughout, that even silence was not disturbed, and the Brothers could give themselves up in perfect quiet to prayer and retirement. M. de Pont-Carré, the friend and protector of M. de la Salle, loved to come there and rest from the duties of his office, and stole many an hour from the world to spend in this house whose pure and holy atmosphere drew him nearer to God.

The Saint Yon house depended on the parish of Saint Sever, and as it had a chapel, the parish-priest had been careful to reserve his parochial rights. The chapel was to be closed to the public during mass and the church services. The Brothers and their boys were to assist at the parochial mass on Sundays, and make their Easter Communion in the parish. On Easter Sunday, they were not to have mass in the chapel. The children were to make their First Communion in the parish, after having been examined

by the parish-priest, and, lastly, the chaplain must be approved by him.

This agreement was made on March 22nd 1706, between the parish-priest and M. de la Salle, and received the approbation of the Archbishop.

It did not last long. As soon as the holy founder had boarders who were "confined by order of Parliament," he could not possibly take them out to mass and the services, and was compelled therefore to procure these benefits for them in the house itself. The parish-priest took offence, and there arose a conflict on the point which caused endless trouble to Blessed de la Salle.

Meanwhile, the Brothers who were in the town were done to death with work. They were on foot at five o'clock, and then got up their poor, and made them say their prayers. At eight o'clock, four of them went off to the schools. They came back at mid-day, served the poor at their dinner, and when these had eaten, they sat down to table themselves. Then, they went back to their schools, returned home at six, and conducted the poor to the refectory, ate after them, said night prayers, and went to bed, to begin again on the morrow. The two Brothers at Saint Maclou had each of them over one hundred children to teach; the Brother at Saint Eloi had the same number, and the one at Saint Godard had over a hundred and fifty. The fifth, who stayed at the Office to instruct the poor, had still more. The most robust health could not have stood out against the strain of such a load; the task would have required three times as many workmen. But the Brothers never flagged; they went on unmurmuringly, wearing themselves out, from May 1705 to June 1707. When one of them dropped from exhaustion, M. de la Salle put another in his place. Seeing, however, that no health could stand it, and that the community was being drained by this constant demand, he addressed a petition to the administrators to beg that the engagement might be modified.

On the 2nd of August 1707, it was decided at an assembly presided over by the First President, that the Brothers should be put

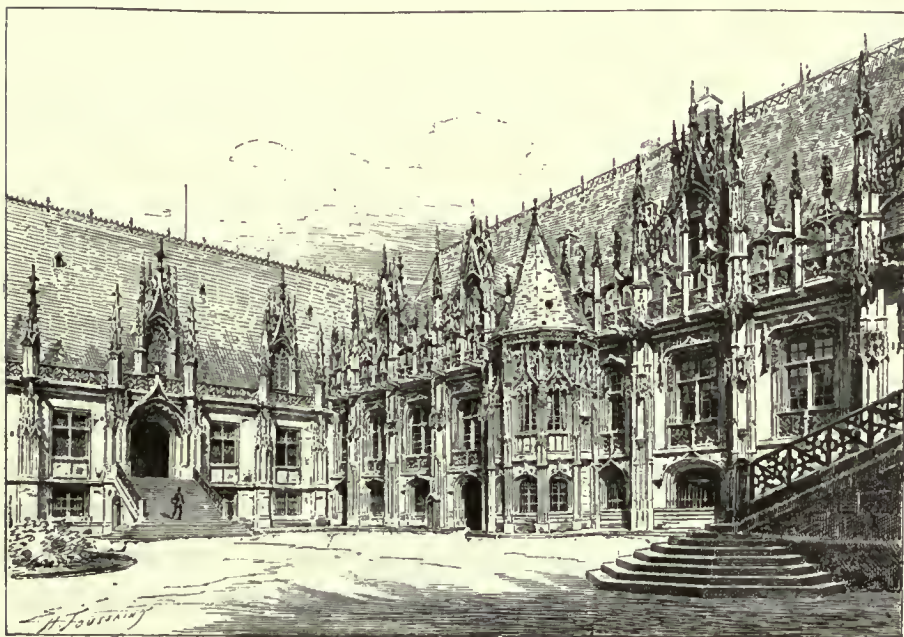
in possession of all the charity schools of the town, relieved of the obligation of coming back to the Hospital to serve the poor, and



Rouen : church of Saint Ouen. — Drawn by Sellier.

allowed to live in a house of their own. They were to be ten in number— two for the Saint Godard school, two for that of Saint Eloi, two for that of Saint Maclou, and two for that of Saint Vivien;

the remaining two were to keep the school at the hospital, and to reside there. The classes were open from eight to eleven in the morning, and from two to five in the afternoon. The administrators provided tables and benches, and paid a salary of six hundred francs. As the house alone cost the Brothers three hundred francs a year, this sum was evidently not enough for their wants, so the deficit was filled up by private charity.



Rouen : Palace of Justice. — Drawn by H. Toussaint.

The Brothers had a hard life of it. While they toiled faithfully at their daily task; the rich forgot them, and left them to suffer cold and hunger and sickness. The poor, whose children they were teaching and bringing up, often repaid them by ingratitude. More than once they were pelted and insulted in the streets; but their patience never failed.

They were still pursued by the ill-will of the writing-masters. The latter, finding that their complaints had produced no effect, had recourse to calumny. They accused M. de la Salle of feeding his boarders badly, of confiding their instruction to ignorant mas-

ters, and of thus robbing the money of their parents and of the administration.

These reports grew so loud that the City Intendant, whose ears they reached, became alarmed, and resolved to see for himself whether they were founded or not. He consulted M. de Pont-Carré, who was himself devoted to the Brothers. This gentleman advised him to visit the house at once, and see with his own eyes what was going on; he volunteered even to go with him, and the two presented themselves at Saint Yon together. This was towards 1708.

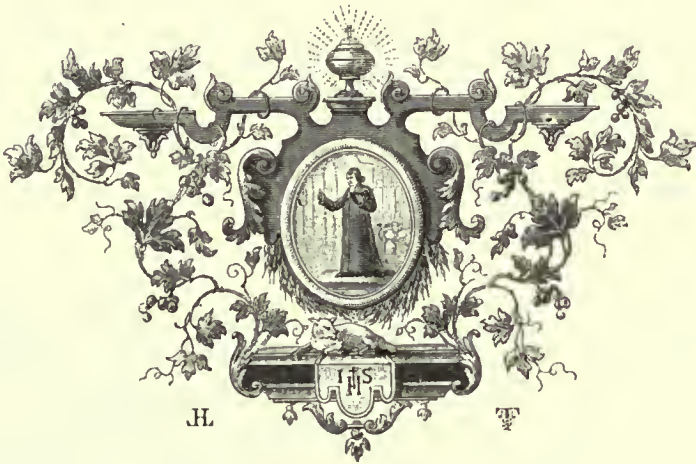
Blessed de la Salle was ill, and confined to his room, a miserable little cell, low and dark, close to the stables, which he had chosen for his lodging. He received the distinguished visitors in this humble place. M. de Pont-Carré informed him of the motive of their visit.

"I venture to assure you," said the holy man, "that the house is not as badly ordered as you have heard. We give to each the office that is suited to him. The novices are occupied with exercises of piety, imbibing the spirit of their vocation, and entering on the practice of those virtues which are proper to their state; others are lay Brothers, occupied solely with the temporal cares of the house. As they are only obliged to do manual work, it is not necessary that they should know how to read and write. The third are young men that are being trained in the lower classes, and we are waiting till they are competent before we give them any fixed employment. They are under the care of a wise and prudent director who sees that all acquit themselves becomingly of their duty, and reports of them to us. As regards the boarders, their food is regulated according to what they pay. Some pay a hundred francs, others fifty, others pay as much as two, three and four hundred francs. It is only just that these different prices should supply different fare. But, as far as that goes, all are in good health."

To prove the truth of this statement, Blessed de la Salle sent for the boarders, one after the other, so that his visitors might judge

of their perfect health by their cheerful and healthy countenances. The Intendant was thoroughly convinced of the utter falsehood of the reports he had heard, and promised to treat them as they deserved. He went away delighted with the house, and full of respect and admiration for Blessed de la Salle.

“ Well, sir, ” said M. de Pont-Carré, as they went away together, “ did I not tell you that you would be satisfied with all you were going to see? ”





Marseilles. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH.



AT the beginning of the eighteenth century, the want of schools for the children of the people was being felt all over France, and masters to teach in them were being clamored for. The town of Marseilles, so noted for its intelligence and its faith, was not behind hand in this movement. The parish-priest of Saint Laurent, a district inhabited chiefly by sailors, was full of zeal for the instruction of youth. He had special sermons preached by his curates, he taught the catechism himself on Sundays and Feasts, and neglected nothing to spread the knowledge of Christian doctrine. But this was not enough. Large schools were wanted, and

the only way of founding them was to form a charitable committee whose members would pledge themselves to provide a certain sum annually, and find a preceptor who would keep the school. A meeting was called to discuss the plan. It was approved, and the first general assembly of founders took place a month later, on the 10th of June 1704. No time had been lost. Thirty-four persons had subscribed for a hundred francs a year; amongst them were the Bishop, the governor of the town, the mayor and the aldermen. The two church-wardens on duty then set to look for a preceptor, and a house wherein to hold the classes. Abbé Baron was elected master of the school, with a salary of one hundred and eighty francs a year. The house was also found, but it was a very small one, and soon proved inadequate.

The following year, another general assembly was held. The founders, well satisfied with abbé Baron, raised his salary to two hundred and twenty francs, and on account of the increased number of children, they resolved to buy a new house. In 1706, on the 21st of January, at the fourth general assembly, a letter was read from the Bishop of Marseilles to Father Croizet, the Jesuit, about the schools. The prelate had heard of M. de la Salle's schools. He had visited them, had conversed with the pious founder, and had been struck by the way the Brothers instructed the children. He, therefore, expressed a desire that they should be asked to take charge of a school; and he added that the best masters were to be had at Avignon. This desire of the Bishop's was an order for the assembly. They had, indeed, already heard two wealthy merchants of Marseilles, M. Morelet and M. Jourdain, speak in high praise of the schools at Avignon, of the discipline of the scholars, the piety of the masters, and the novelty of the method. These two merchants contributed largely to the foundation of the new school.

One of the church-wardens, M. Joseph Treuillard, deputed by the assembly, went to Avignon, and brought back two Brothers, one of whom was Brother Albert of the Child Jesus. They were presented to the assembly, publicly congratulated, and it was

agreed that they should have each a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds. The school was opened on the 6th of March 1706; but soon it grew so large, that they had to look out for a house for a second school. Meantime, in order to satisfy the demands of the school-masters, those implacable adversaries of the Brothers' work, all the children whose parents were at all able to pay for schooling were forbidden the schools; they were not to take up the places of the poor.

On the 17th of July, the same year, a touching ceremony took place. M. André Porry, the donor of the new house, died, and the children were taken to his funeral by the Brothers. They walked through the town in good order several hundred of them, their eyes cast down, their rosary in their hands, praying for their benefactor, who was buried in the chapel of the hospital of charity. This unwonted spectacle edified the whole city, and the Brothers became very popular.

The school went on well till 1720, when the plague broke out. One of the Brothers fell a victim to it, and the others devoted themselves to the care of the sick. The epidemic ceased, the town was, as it were, renewed, faith was quickened, and all felt the need of giving a Christian education to the young. The Bishop—the grand and admirable Belzunce—wished to found Christian schools in the five parishes of the town, and, with the help of several good men, he succeeded in doing so. Even at the hospital they asked for Brothers to bring up the poor children there. The confraternity of Our Lady of Good Help gave them a fine spacious house, and in 1727—they being then sixteen in community—they were received as one of the constituted bodies, and numbered amongst the Regulars of the town.

The Dijon schools were founded in 1705, by the assistance of M. Claude Rigoley, President of the Chamber of Accounts, brother-in-law of the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, a pious and charitable man, a daily communicant. His family wished to co-operate in the good work. His uncle, M. de Gergy, offered to pay four hundred francs a year for the support of two Brothers, and, to insure the payment, had sunk a sum of eight thousand francs. M. Rigoley, accordingly, wrote to M. de la Salle that the necessary funds were secured. The holy man accepted the offer, and sent two Brothers who opened their school in June 1705, in the parish of Saint Pierre. The Vicar general and the mayor, and various other notabilities, contributed to this establishment.

The Brothers were so devoted and displayed so much ability in the management of their school, that poor children were sent to them from all the parishes of the town until they were overladen. A charitable person then came forward, and founded a second school for the poor of Saint Philibert. A third Brother was sent. Soon after this, a fourth came, and a third school was opened. They were patronized by the President, and, after his death, by his widow and children; the magistrates looked kindly on them; but their best friends on earth and their most powerful patrons in heaven, were the poor. It would be difficult to find in any family archives a more precious document than the following letter, signed "*The poor of Dijon.*" Its eloquence, alas! is no longer the language of the poor of the nineteenth century :

" You know, gentlemen, how full this town is of poor, and how wanting in zealous persons to look after the education of our children— which is, as all agree, the most necessary of good works, for the public as well as for individuals. This it is that induces us to have recourse with confidence to your charity, humbly entreating it to second the designs of Providence, which presents so favorable an opportunity for bringing up our children as Christians and securing their eternal salvation...

" You are, gentlemen, our resource in the great good that is about to be secured to us permanently, but which must fall through if your charitable hands do not uphold it. We expect this favor from your solid religion and your ardent charity; our hope is the more founded in that we have the honour to be united





to you by a common faith, to be your countrymen, your neighbors, to see our poor homes united to yours. We are all, so to speak, children of the same mother, the holy Church, sheep of the same flock, disciples and servants of the same master, Jesus-Christ, our shepherd; we all partake of the same parish bread, of the same word of God, of the same services, of the same Sacraments at the same Table of the Lord, of the same Passover, and we hope to be all united one day in the inheritance of our common Father, perhaps because of this holy establishment. We are, finally, the sentinels and keepers of your houses, in defence of which we are willing to sacrifice our lives.

“ May all these motives, gentlemen, induce you not to abandon us in so pressing an opportunity. On our side, we venture to assure you, gentlemen, that we are all going to redouble prayers to beg of God to shower down on you and your families all sorts of spiritual and temporal blessings, and to lengthen your days to which are attached the glory of God, the lessening of ignorance, of idleness and all the vices of youth; the good employment of time, peace and tranquillity of parents in their homes and of the public in the streets and the churches; the maintenance of those Brothers whose life is so regular, and of such public utility; the salvation of so many poor families who have not the means of paying the masters by the month, and who would rather use their money in paying their tax, and the other necessities of their house; finally the good instruction of so many poor children, who are, one may say, abandoned, and who are the general edification of the town. Happy are we, if, by these marks of our just gratitude, we can testify to you with what respect and submissiveness we have the honor to be, gentlemen,

“ Your very humble, submissive and very obedient servants,

“ *The Poor of Dijon.* ”

This prayer was heard, and the needful money granted. We see, therefore, that in the eighteenth century the problem of free education for the poor existed as in our own day, and that it was solved by the unaided effort of charity. But we also see that sentiments of devotion on the one side and respect on the other, bound the rich and the poor together, and that the mutual good will that religion kept up between them, facilitated the solution of many problems which now divide them in two hostile camps.

It was the piety of a holy Bishop that called the Brothers to Mende in Gévaudan. Mgr de Piancourt, former Abbot of the monastery of Saint Lieufroid, in the diocese of Evreux, Doctor of Theology of the Faculty of Paris and Bishop of Mende from 1671, was very zealous for the instruction of youth, and had its development in the diocese greatly at heart. He wrote, therefore, to Blessed de la Salle. The holy man did not care to send two Brothers. He preferred to establish a full community, composed of four Brothers for the schools, and a fifth to manage the house. However, he desired Brother Ponce, who was at Avignon, to go to Mende, and make enquiries. This journey took place towards the end of February 1707. Some time afterwards, at the request of the parish-priest of Mende, an ecclesiastic of that town, M. Boulet, mentioned the affair to the servant of God, whom he met in Paris at an audience of the Archbishop's, and went to see him where he was staying, near the Porte Saint-Roch. He made him see that the town was too poor to support a large establishment, and that it would be much better to found a school, let it be ever so small, and trust to its spreading in time through the diocese.

Blessed de la Salle, on hearing this, changed his views, and the school was founded in March 1707. The Brothers were to have one hundred and fifty crowns¹ each, "which were very little," remarks Abbé Boulet, "because they never would accept any little present or help from the parents even if they were dying of hunger, and they could not count on making anything themselves, since they never meddled with any business outside their own calling."

Brother Ponce, who was alone to do all the work, fell ill. The work was so considerable, that he could not get through it unassisted, and the Bishop was obliged to ask for a second Brother. His letter deserves to be quoted: "I cannot, my dear sir, bless God enough for having inspired you with the design of forming school-masters to teach the young, and train them in Christian

¹ A crown, *écu*, was worth three francs.

piety. Seminaries form good priests, but school-masters, by giving the first impressions of piety and faith, may contribute towards the sanctification of all Christians.

“ It is impossible to say how pleased I am with the Brothers that you sent me. I shall be greatly obliged if you will send another who can undertake both writing and arithmetic; for this is the way to attract the young and thus impart to them early impressions of Christian piety. I will give them, on my part, all the protection they can expect, so that they will have entire satisfaction in their work here. ”

The excellent Bishop, who had a particular esteem for the holy man, did not long survive the foundation of this school. He died at Mende, on the 13th of December, the same year. By his will, he bequeathed the Brothers a sum which secured the perpetuity of their foundation, and his successor, M. Baglion de la Salle de Sail-lant, continued his patronage to them. Later on an evil wind blew upon the Mende school. The Brothers sent there proved unworthy of the trust that had been reposed in them, and their Superior had to suffer from their conduct. The Saints have always had to bear these trials.

The Brothers were called to the Cevennes to rescue the young from heresy. The Huguenots had been overcome by arms; but religion was to finish their conquest. Might had overthrown them, but they had yet to be converted. The town of Alais having been raised to an episcopal see, M^r François Chevalier de Saulx was named Bishop, and selected M. Merrez, Canon of Nîmes, for his Vicar general. His first care was to provide good school-masters. M. Merrez had known Blessed de la Salle at Saint Sul-pice, and made haste to write to him.

The holy founder at once sent him two Brothers, with whom the Bishop was so pleased that he asked for more. The following is his letter to Blessed de la Salle : “ We have here, dear sir, your Brothers, the masters with whom every one is satisfied, which makes me wish for many more of them to spread through the towns of the Cevennes. If I had thirty, I should find plenty for them

to do. I have the honour to thank you for those that we have, and to ask you for some others. I do, and I will continue to do, all I possibly can for them. They are doing incalculable good. In order to keep alive in them the spirit you have imparted to them, I will take care to watch over them, and I will give them my advice whenever it may be necessary, and, moreover, I will let you know of it. If we can spread the help of your dear and good Brothers, it will be an infallible means of making great progress in the families of our Catholic poor. I confide my sentiments to you, dear sir, in order that you may feel willing that we should act in unison in this lost country which so much needs your charitable zeal. You may count upon it, I shall spare nothing for the assistance of your Brothers, and I shall take an affectionate interest in all their little concerns on every occasion. I ask for your good prayers, assuring you that it is with all my heart that I subscribe myself your very humble and obedient servant."

This truly apostolic letter is dated January 28th 1708, and signed : " F., First Bishop of Alais. " It throws a vivid light upon Episcopal and Christian life in that eighteenth century which was to terminate in revolt and bloodshed.

At Grenoble, a number of charitable persons formed an association for the relief of the poor and the instruction of youth. The initiative was taken by ecclesiastics; but by and by the association opened its doors to laymen, members of Parliament, and many persons of rank, all of whom were leading a life controlled by the highest Christian standard. No one was admitted as member until he had been a long time on trial. The members elected a superior, and obeyed him promptly. At the death of an associate, a requiem mass was celebrated, all the members being present, and every member who was a priest said mass for the repose of his soul.

M^{gr} Allemand de Montmartin, Bishop of Grenoble, took the direction of the association. The members met at stated times to discuss their common work, and one of the charities that most engaged their attention was the foundation of Christian schools. They resolved to found some in the town; but for this masters and money were necessary. They convened a meeting, and exposed their plan, which was approved. All present promised to give a yearly subscription of twenty or fifty louis¹ according to their means, and to leave by will a sum of money that would bring in that amount yearly. Abbé de Saléon, then first Canon of Saint André and later bishop of Agen, and Abbé Canel, Councilor clerk of Parliament, were deputed to find masters. The first named had known Blessed de la Salle at Saint Sulpice, and in the beginning of the year 1706 he went to Paris and saw him, and asked him for two Brothers. Abbé Canel, who was also a Sulpician, joined his entreaties to those of his colleague. Blessed de la Salle did not refuse; meantime, the members had to get ready the school at Grenoble. Fifteen months passed.

When all was ready, Abbé Canel wrote to the holy man on August 30th 1707:— “ When I was in Paris, some fifteen months ago, I had the honor of calling on you, my dear sir, to ask if you would give us two Brothers of your community to teach in a charity school at Grenoble, and you were so kind as to lead me to think you would grant our request. I think that M^{gr} the Bishop of Gap, who remained in Paris after me, also spoke to you on the subject. Since then, we have made every thing ready for their lodging and maintenance. I, therefore, beg of you to let us have them with as little delay as possible, and to tell us how much we are to provide both for their journey and their support at Grenoble. We shall take the necessary funds from the alms destined to good works, for we look upon this as one of the best to which the money could be applied. If you will kindly write me word how much is needed for the journey, I will have the amount remitted to you at once. ”

¹ A louis was 24 francs.

Blessed de la Salle could not resist so generous an offer. It was not customary to defray the travelling expenses of the Brothers, which were often a heavy tax on the poor community. He sent off two Brothers who opened a school in the parish of Saint Laurent. President Bara, M. Gelin, the grand provost, his brother and their mother were amongst its benefactors. Abbé Didier, Canon of Saint Laurent, had constituted himself the spiritual director of the Brothers, and filled the place of Blessed de la Salle towards them. Finally, M^r de Montmartin supported them by his influence and his purse, and his successors inherited his sentiments of affection for them.

With such patronage supplementing the devotedness of the Brothers, the school soon prospered. In a few years another had to be founded in the parish of Saint Hugues, and later on M^r de Caulet, one of the successors of M^r de Montmartin, confided the children of the general hospital to the Brothers. Grenoble was, in truth, a city blessed of God.

In 1708, a priest of the town of Vans, Abbé Vincent, one of the great Nivernais families, being at Avignon, heard about Blessed de la Salle's schools and went to see them. He came away delighted, and resolved to have similar ones in his own town. Vans is situated in the diocese of Uzès, towards the Cevennes, six leagues from Alais. Almost the whole population were Huguenots; the children were brought up without principles; the morality of the people was deplorable.

Before leaving Avignon, Abbé Vincent went to a notary, and in order to carry out his plan, made his will. The will is dated July 20th 1708. The testator declares that he will live and die in the faith of the holy Catholic, Roman, and Apostolic Church, and be buried with the simplicity becoming a poor priest. He constitutes the Brothers his heirs, and charges them with the instruc-

tion of the youth of the town of Vans, to form them all to piety, and to imbue them with the principles of Catholicity.

“ I am persuaded, ” he says, “ that the greater number of the children of this town fall into evil courses from want of education. Born in heresy, they have no sentiment or knowledge of the Catholic religion, and this is the fatal cause of their disorderly lives. ” Abbé Vincent implores his family not to take it amiss if he puts the interests of religion and the poor before theirs; and that they may not consider themselves disinherited, and find in this a pretext for attacking his will, he bequeathes them each five pence. He implores, at the same time, the Bishops of Uzès to honor with their patronage and support a foundation so useful to religion generally, and to the town of Vans in particular.

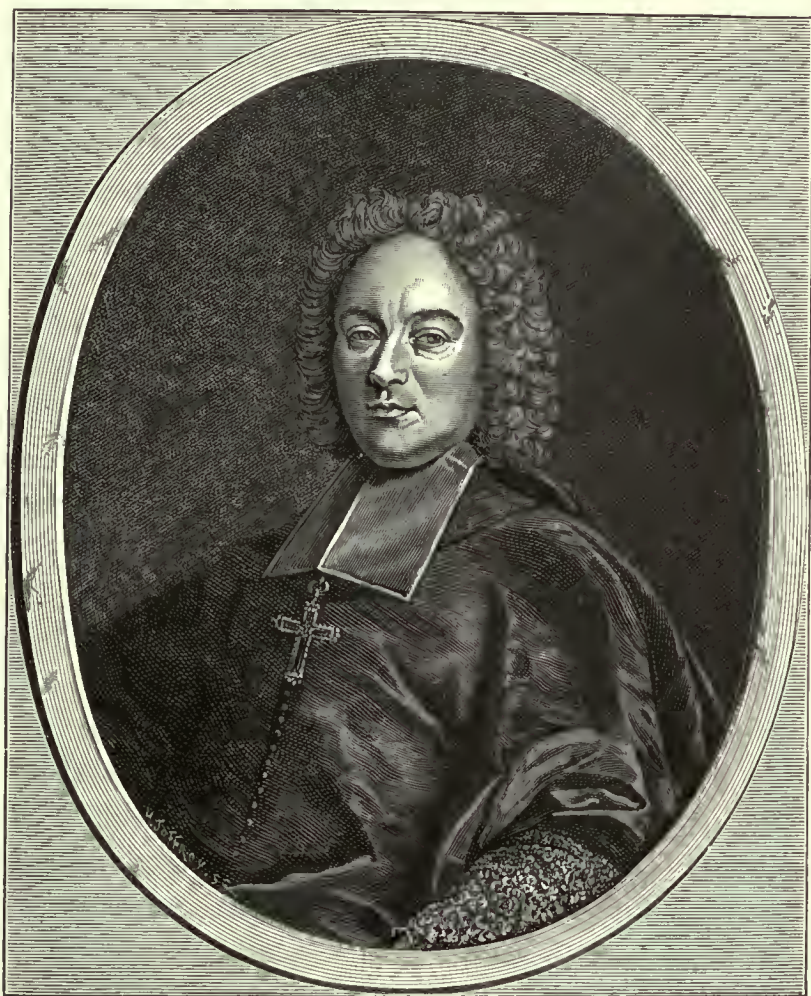
The priest was not rich, and his legacy was a moderate one; but it was given from the heart, and it was blessed. The testator died on the 19th of September 1710 in the town of Aubenas. After his death, the will was sent to Blessed de la Salle, who accepted it. He was not one to be stopped by the money question when there was work to be done, and in a very short time the school was opened at Vans. It was not however done without difficulty. There was great opposition in the town. The Huguenot population would not hear of Catholic school-masters. The Brothers overcame this resistance and then their adversaries had recourse to all sorts of ill-treatment to disgust them with the work. They insulted them in the streets, they set traps for them, they raised barricades before the door so as to prevent their coming out, and several times made an attack on their lives. One day a crowd collected round the house, and said they were going to lay siege to it, and massacre every one in it. They stoned the windows, and tried to break in the doors. The Brothers did not defend themselves; they remained in their oratory on their knees in prayer, offering up their lives to God for His glory. God did not accept the sacrifice, or rather he wished them to be His otherwise than by martyrdom. The police came to the rescue, dispersed the rioters, and arrested the ring-leaders, who were

severely punished. The town resumed its wonted tranquillity, the school soon prospered, and Blessed de la Salle praised God who had deigned to uphold the courage of the Brothers, and deliver them from another trial.

In 1710, Abbé Huchon, a Lazarist, pastor of Versailles, also asked for Brothers. M. de la Salle sent him two, who took up their residence in a hired house in the Deer Park. One of them was amongst the most remarkable of the community. Well informed, distinguished in manner, he excelled in his profession, and his school, by its flourishing condition, attracted great praise. It attracted too much, and vanity ruined him. Versailles was a dangerous abode for Religious. The court resided there, and one inhaled in the place a certain atmosphere of worldliness that was fatal to weak characters. This Brother was infected by it, and lost the love of his Rule. Blessed de la Salle soon perceived this, and, concerned above all for the soul of his disciple, he wanted to remove him from this pestilential air before it was too late. But the Brother had foreseen this, and insinuated himself into the good graces of the parish-priest, who took his side, and positively refused to let him be removed, threatening to close the school if he were. In vain did the servant of God urge the reason that guided him; the other would listen to nothing—the alleged fears were all groundless; he promised to watch over the danger himself. M. de la Salle had to give way.

Soon after this, they came one day to inform the parish-priest that the man for whom he had so rashly stood bail, had thrown aside his habit and gone off. The parish-priest immediately sent after him an old missionary, skilful in converting souls, who came up with the renegade at the end of one of the avenues. But prayers, threats, all were in vain, and the pastor perceived too late how rash it is of strangers to meddle with the govern-

ment of communities, and prevent the removal of subjects against the judgment of the superior; for superiors, with the burden of authority, have the grace of discernment. A thousand symptoms, imperceptible to others, warn them of the coming danger,



Monseigneur Belzunce, Bishop of Marseilles (p. 327). — Engraved by H. Jeffroy, from a portrait of the period.

and like skillful captains they haul in sail before the advancing storm. Moreover, in a community, the general good is always to be considered before individual convenience.

This accident did not slacken M. Huchon's zeal for the free schools. He soon established a second near his parish, and ended

by buying a house which served as a little seminary in which he settled them.

Instruction had long been neglected in the town of Moulins. The archives contain ancient documents which enable us to trace the first primary school held in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by one or two masters in the chapel of the Menestreaulx. But this establishment, where the lessons were frequently interrupted, represented both primary and secondary education. The learned look upon it as the cradle of the college, and it could only give a very imperfect education to the children.

In the year 1675, Gaspard de Savignac, bachelor of the Sorbonne, a discreet and venerable man, was pastor of the parish of Iseure, which he administered with the help of four curates. One of them, M. Louis Aubery, was a very old priest, very austere, filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He had all his life lived up to evangelical simplicity, and employed all his means in doing good. The same Divine influence which had swept over the soul of Blessed de la Salle in 1682, and impelled him to devote himself to the education of poor children, had also passed over that of Abbé Aubery. That same year, when Blessed de la Salle was opening his house to the school-masters, Abbé Aubery, who had not yet heard of the holy man's undertaking at Rheims, was receiving children into his house, and teaching them. In 1686, Abbé Aubery gave his goods to the poor, and his house to the pastor of Saint Iseure, that he might use it for the primary school. Precisely in this same year, Blessed de la Salle was making a similar sacrifice. The analogy between the two is strikingly significant. Distant from each other some fifty or a hundred leagues, the instruction of the poor was occupying both these generous souls, and both were creating and developing works of the same nature.

Abbé Aubery, after having begun the work, never let it drop.

He taught in the school himself for years. He instructed children in Christian doctrine and the catechism, in reading Latin and French, in writing, arithmetic and decyphering manuscripts. His zeal was so great, his school so flourishing, that the Bishop of Autun, in 1698, named him Rector of the charity schools of the town.

He could not carry on this work alone; but he sought in vain for auxiliaries. Everywhere masters were wanting. He took in two young priests whose zeal soon grew tired of the work, and in 1699, the school, that it cost him so much to open, had to be closed for lack of teachers.

Abbé Aubery was not disheartened. He took advantage of this interruption to repair and enlarge the house, and, in 1701, he opened the school again, and taught in it himself. One hundred and fifty children answered at once to his invitation, and he went on teaching them for several years. In 1709, he went to Paris to try and get Letters patent in favor of his school. He stayed at Saint Sulpice, and, hearing about Blessed de la Salle, he at once made acquaintance with him. God had now brought him face to face with the man and the work he had been seeking for seven and twenty years. On his return to Moulins, he took full information concerning the schools kept there by the Brothers. He received, moreover, from Marseilles, a wonderful account of the results of their teaching. He then wrote to Blessed de la Salle, asking him for two Brothers, who were immediately sent to him.

They opened their classes in 1710, and here, as elsewhere, their success surpassed all expectation. They had over three hundred children, and Abbé Languet de Gergy, Vicar general of Autun, and since Archbishop of Sens, was so charmed with their manner of teaching, that he entreated them to come to the parish once a week, to teach catechism to the children in presence of the young clerics who were invited on purpose that they might benefit by their method.

In spite of the arrival of the Brothers, Abbé Aubery remained Rector of the school. He it was who continued to support and

manage it; he it was who directed the studies. In 1711, he drew up a little set of rules which it is interesting to compare with the *Management of Christian schools* of Blessed de la Salle, on which it is in a measure modelled, but from which it differs in some points. "The charity-schools of Moulins are placed under the direction of a committee of five persons : the two parish-priests, who are life members, two laymen named for six years and re-eligible, and a Rector who is always an ecclesiastic first named by the Bishop, and then by the Board. The masters are taken from the Community of Brothers. If this Community should not be available, then priests shall be chosen, and if these cannot be had, then wise and virtuous laymen who are not married, and who never must marry, or have been married. The children begin by learning Latin, they go on to French, and then to manuscripts which they must bring with them."

These rules were approved by the Bishop. He consecrated the method of the Brothers, modified in a few points by the personal views of Abbé Aubery.

In 1717, Abbé Aubery, feeling himself growing old, wished to insure the perpetuity of his foundation, and wrote to the Bishop, who sent him a new approbation with leave to apply for Letters patent.

Thanks to the intervention of the Abbot of Septfonds, thanks also to the warm support of all the Royal functionaries and all the notabilities of the town of Moulins, the Letters patent were granted. They are dated June 1717; but it was necessary to have them registered by the Parliament of Paris, and here it was that difficulties started up. Parliament ordered an enquiry *de commodo et incommodo*. Some persons came forward to say that "the schools were useless, prejudicial to the poor, to artisans, and good for nothing but to form forgers, cheats and rascals." The general hospital of Moulins, which had at first consented to the foundation, drew back; it wanted to absorb Abbé Aubery's work, and had recourse to every sort of trick to succeed in this. It carried the town with it, and persuaded the municipality that the Abbé

had no right to keep a school. The law-suit lasted ten years, and cost over a thousand francs. Finally, Abbé Aubery won the day. The Letters patent were registered in 1728. More fortunate than Blessed de la Salle, Abbé Aubery was allowed to see the triumph of his efforts, and survived the legal recognition of his school three years.

There lived at Boulogne-sur-Mer a pious layman, M. de la Cocherie, who spent all his time and all his money in doing good. He heard of the free schools, and wished to found some. He had no difficulty in winning the consent of the Bishop of Boulogne, who had founded them at Calais some years previously, and so could judge of their value. As M. de la Cocherie's liberalities had left him with only enough for the bare necessities of life, he was obliged to have recourse to the purses of his friends. The funds were found, and four Brothers sent by M. de la Salle were received with all honor by the Bishop, who insisted on lodging them in his seminary until a house was found for them.

Later on, a second school was founded in the upper town.

This house at Boulogne was the last foundation Blessed de la Salle made in the provinces before he died. But, before continuing the history of the persecutions which formed the web of his life, we must stop a while to consider this series of foundations, and the facilities which our ancient laws afforded for doing good and securing the instruction of the people.

The schools are founded everywhere after very much the same fashion. Charitable persons hear about them, and become eager to endow their native place with them; these benefactors are priests, bishops, magistrates, pious persons of all conditions. Funds are collected, a house is bought, a sum is sunk to insure an income to the establishment, and it is thus protected against possible vicissitudes. If the founder himself is not rich enough, he appeals

to others, he forms a group of charitable persons who club together and provide the money, and watch over the use made of it.

Faith was ardent in those days, and made charity fruitful. When we cast a glance on the works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we are struck with wonder by the multitude of charitable foundations. The spread of the Institute of the Brothers is in itself a most remarkable instance of this. North and South, in the remote provinces as in Paris, the Brothers are in demand, and welcomed with enthusiasm, and their praise and that of their work are in all men's mouths. Everywhere the need for schools is felt, but above all of schools for the poor. Whenever they are to be founded, money is always forthcoming. Parents, priests, magistrates, all alike, are full of good will; but they know not where to turn for masters. The Brothers then appear like the artisans of Providence. They arrive at the right moment to do the needful work, and have all the requirements for doing it well. As to M. de la Salle, we have seen with what veneration his name is already surrounded. Bishops feel honored in receiving him as their guest, towns quarrel for the privilege of his presence, and he is already revered as a benefactor of humanity. But, alas! it is not so nearer home, and he is still the object of fresh persecutions, and every day beset by new enemies. That bright halo which encircles his brow in the distance is in reality a crown of thorns. God so willed it for His glory and the sanctification of His servant. The thorny crowns are the only ones that never pass away.







Paris in Blessed de la Salle's time. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRESH TRIALS.



ALTHOUGH the Brothers had now been eighteen years in the Rue Princesse—in the parish of Saint Sulpice—they had never been able to make any changes in the house, and it remained as inconvenient as ever. It was here that they all collected every night after teaching in their schools in the various districts of the parish; and here also they passed their Sundays and holidays since the Novitiate had been removed to Saint Yon. The house was unhealthy; it had no garden, and the Brothers were obliged to take their recreation in a court overlooked by houses on all sides. The

street itself was narrow and dark, and it was impossible to pass in and out of it without exciting the curiosity of the neighbors. Blessed de la Salle, who was then living at the Saint Roch school, was very anxious to find another place for the Brothers; but as he had not much influence with the parish-priest, he did not dare broach the matter to him. He confided the affair to a Brother whom M. de la Chétardie held in great esteem and affection. A house, which looked suitable, was found in the district of the Incurables, near the barrier of Sèvres. It was quietly situated, spacious, and had a large garden. The Brother spoke about it to M. de la Chétardie. The house was hired for four hundred francs a year, and the Brothers moved into it. They remained there until 1722, when they purchased a house Rue Notre Dame-des-Champs, near the Convent of Saint Thecla.

A few months after they were installed in the Rue de Sèvres, the Saint Roch school passed into other hands; Blessed de la Salle then came to reside with them, and employed the short term of rest in overlooking his writings, and publishing a correct edition of them.

But peace never lasted long for him; he was destined to suffer and to do battle all his life. Want again seized upon him, and threatened to carry off his whole flock. It was during the year 1709, which was so cruel for the poor. The harvest had been bad, the winter was long and severe. Famine desolated France. The rich curtailed their alms, and the poor found no resource in their work or in the charity of others.

The Brothers of the Rue de Sèvres began by pinching and restricting themselves in every way to the bare necessities. In spite of the intense cold, they had no fire, and their worn out clothes were not replaced. In the refectory, they ate just what prevented them from dying of hunger. They did not complain, however; for Blessed de la Salle was in their midst, always serene, sharing their want, and sustaining their courage. "Don't fear," he would say to them, "God never fails those who hope in Him. Everything is granted to lively faith and perfect confidence, even miracles when they are necessary. Jesus Christ has pledged Him-

self to furnish all that is needful to those who are seeking His justice and His kingdom. He has never denied it to those who serve Him; every page of Scripture testifies to this truth. Nothing happens in this life except what God permits or ordains. Good and painful things, poverty and riches come from His hand, and He distributes them all with wisdom and kindness. If we have received so many benefits from His liberality, why should we refuse to accept a few penalties from His hand? He is the Lord—let Him do as He sees fit. ”

Blessed de la Salle suffered more for the Brothers than for himself. Suffering was familiar to him; it was his nourishment; but he trembled for those whom he had to lead; he was fearful lest their souls should falter under the burden.

The Brothers who were abroad were his great anxiety; for he was not by their side to cheer them up and sustain them. The scourge was laying waste all France, and all the houses of the Brothers felt its cruel grip; but Rouen had suffered more especially. Blessed de la Salle, as we know, had removed his Novitiate thither. There were about thirty Brothers there; ten were teaching in the schools of the town; of the remaining, some were novices, others were charged with the care of the boarders of Saint Yon, and the service of the house. They had not here, as elsewhere, any endowment which put them beyond the reach of want. Their sole resources were the six hundred francs paid them yearly by the Board of the municipality, and the scanty fruits yielded by the garden of Saint Yon, whose sandy soil, despite the patient tilling of the Brothers, yielded but a poor crop. Out of this income, they had to pay the rent of the house which ate up half of it. All told, there remained to the Community, for their food and other necessities, three hundred francs. They would have been all dead at the end of a month if private charity had not come to their assistance; but during the famine, provisions were at famine price, and people gave much less. To fill up the measure of their trials, the new Archbishop, M^r d'Aubigné, did not like M. de la Salle and his work. He had allowed himself to be circumvented, and

thought he was doing a great deal in not turning the Brothers out of his diocese. The population, moreover, had not quite forgotten its old prejudices, and many a time the Brothers were pelted and insulted in the streets by the men whose children they were bringing up. In fact, their destitution was complete, and their holy founder could not help them; in his own house, there were barely the necessities of life. He resolved to call back a certain number of the Brothers. He left the masters to keep the schools going, but he called away the novices. The inmates of the Paris house were thus nearly doubled, and there was not accommodation for so many. Mattresses were put down in the rooms, and here the poor new-comers stretched themselves to seek in a sleep, too often hindered by cold, forgetfulness of the hunger that gnawed their vitals during the day.

There were forty persons to feed, and no food, and no money. Nothing, in fact, but a miserable pension that was often delayed in the payment. This fearful want did not for one moment relax Blessed de la Salle's charity. Although his own family wanted bread, the doors were never closed against those who knocked for help. Strangers came, asking to be received into the Institute. The holy man admitted them the moment he recognized the first signs of a true vocation. Many of them did not persevere; after a few months, they found the Rule too severe, the life too hard, and went away. Then the Brothers complained that these intruders had come to eat up their scanty rations for nothing; but Blessed de la Salle would answer: "They have made a good retreat; that may help towards their salvation."

His constancy never failed, and Providence, while sustaining him, did not preserve him from the common scourge. One day, everything was used up, and there was not a crust of bread in the house; no money in the purse, and the baker refused credit. Blessed de la Salle then had recourse to God in prayer. As he came out to say mass, he met a charitable person who asked him where he was going: "I am going to say mass," he replied, "and pray to God to send us food for the community

to-day, for we have nothing to eat, and nothing wherewith to buy food. ”

“ Go in peace, ” replied the other; “ I will provide it all. ” And he at once went with ten crowns to the Community, thus relieving them of their distress.

Such traits abound in the history of all religious houses. God lets them go to the very brink of destitution, and then holds out His hand and prevents them from sinking. Thus do mothers act when teaching their children to walk. A leading string is holding them from behind; they don't see it, and they fancy themselves alone; but if their foot stumbles, the string holds them up, and prevents their falling. And are we not all of us like children whose steps, tottering in the path of duty, need the vigilance of God to teach us to walk straight? If His hand is always holding us up, we grow negligent and cowardly; if He draws it away, we fall. What we lack is confidence.

Blessed de la Salle had attained to this virtue of abandonment, and no trial could now make him waver. Sickness followed in the wake of famine. An epidemic of scurvy broke out in the house; the Brothers caught it. It is a contagious disease, often fatal, and is caused by want and bad food. Blessed de la Salle did not lose his serenity. He arranged an infirmary isolated from the rest of the house, put the patients there and deputed two Brothers to nurse them. Meantime, he was busy seeking remedies for them. The disease was raging in Paris, where there was a doctor very skilful in treating it; but he was overrun; moreover, his visits and medicines cost very dear, and the holy man had no means of paying for them.

He went to see Helvetius, a Dutch doctor, whom he knew well, and who had taken care of him in more than one illness. He asked his advice, and Helvetius induced his colleague to attend the Brothers gratis. Blessed de la Salle put the sick Brothers into a coach, and carried them off to the doctor, who treated them, and cured them.

All things come to an end in this world, sorrows as well as joys.

The epidemic disappeared with the winter. Abundance returned with the fine weather, and nothing remained to the Brothers of the misery they had undergone, but the merit of the patience with which they had borne it. But, for the servant of God, the cross never passed away; trials did not cease, they only changed.

The house was again torn by dissension. There was a faithless Brother in the flock. Was there not a faithless one amongst the chosen twelve? The father of the family sows the good seed in his field; but the enemy comes in the night time, and oversows the cockles. An ambitious Brother wanted to supplant Blessed de la Salle in the government of the Institute. He excited discontent and murmurings amongst his companions, and set to work to detach them from their superior and draw them away to a new house that he meant to hire on his own account, promising to provide amply for all their wants. He went so far in malice as to try to envenom them by the remembrance of the winter's sufferings and privations. Several amongst them had murmured in their hearts because Blessed de la Salle had taken in strangers, and shared with them the meagre resources of the family. "He had no right to squander the alms that were given him for us, argued the unfaithful one, "it was misapplying the pension allowed us by the pastor of Saint Sulpice."

This little plot was being laid in the dark, unknown to the holy man, while his enemies outside were in the secret, and working against him. The leader confided his plan to another Brother who joined in the intrigue. But, suddenly, the latter changed his mind; he was stricken with remorse, and could not keep his secret. He told it out to the whole community, and revealed the infernal scheme that had been concocted against their father. The indignation of the Brothers could only be appeased by the expulsion of the guilty one. M. de la Salle delayed at first, hoping to win him over to repentance; but he was losing his time; the traitor's hatred only grew more rancorous, and he again endeavoured to gain over the community. The servant of God was compelled to send him away, and then peace was restored to the house.

Scarcely was this trial over, when another and heavier one began. In the month of December 1707, Blessed de la Salle was in a house in the Rue Saint Honoré, where he was being treated for a tumour in the knee, brought on by constant kneeling, when a young Abbé from Saint Calais, named Clement, asked to speak with him. On entering his presence, the young man fell at his knees, and implored his help in a pious undertaking that he had at heart. He had conceived the idea of educating boys from ten to twenty in order to teach them a trade, and form them to a Christian life. His father was rich, he said, and allowed him a pension of eight hundred francs, and he was waiting for a rich abbey that was to fall to him, and whose revenues he would devote to the development of his scheme. But meantime, he needed guidance and help. He had just been visiting the schools of the Rue Princesse, and learned there that M. de la Salle might afford him precisely the help he wanted, so he did not lose an hour in coming to see him.

We know how prudent Blessed de la Salle was in his decisions. He answered only a few words to his seemingly tempting and brilliant proposal. His own work, he said, had a distinct aim, and he could not deviate from this. If Abbé Clements' design fell in with its scope and purpose, he would not refuse his cooperation; but it was necessary, in the first instance, that the Abbé should make himself fully acquainted with the object of the Institute, and, with this intention, he gave him a prepared outline of its aim and its work to look over.

A few days later Abbé Clement came back, full of enthusiasm; he was delighted above all with the holy man's scheme for educating school-masters for the country. One and the same house, he said, could perfectly contain them and the young men that he himself purposed educating, and no time should be lost.

But Blessed de la Salle was in no hurry; he examined the matter, reflected over it, and let a year go by. Abbé Clement came to see him several times a week, sometimes alone, sometimes with his preceptor, Abbé Langoisseur, who approved of all he was doing;

sometimes with a friend of M. de la Salle's, M. Rogier, who was delighted with the new project, and announced his intention of helping it on with all his influence. Letters followed visits, and in all these, Abbé Clement appeared loyal, charitable and full of ardor. Blessed de la Salle having expressed a fear lest he should after a while withdraw from the new work, and leave the burden of it on him, Abbé Clement replied by a letter full of assurances of devotedness and affection. Blessed de la Salle, before finally deciding, resolved to lay the affair before the Archbishop, who approved of it, and advised him concerning the situation of the new house. The prelate wished that the seminary for school-masters for the country should be in the country rather than in Paris. Abbé Clement ended by discovering at Saint Denis a house that suited perfectly. It belonged to a miss Poignant, sister of the one who had founded the school, and was at the present time let to the bailiff of Saint Denis. Abbé Clement visited it several times with his preceptor, found it suitable, discussed the terms of the sale with miss Poignant, and bought it for the sum of thirteen thousand francs. The contract was drawn up in October 1708.

Abbé Clement was the purchaser. It was he who bought the house, settled the price, and promised to pay. As, however, he was a minor of two and twenty, and feared his father's opposition, he wished the contract to be made out in M. Rogier's name. A portion, at least, of the amount had to be paid down to the proprietor. M. Rogier would not give the money. Abbé Clement had none at his disposal, so he begged Blessed de la Salle to advance first a sum of four thousand francs, and then another of twelve hundred francs. The holy man went to fetch some funds that he had given in keeping to a notary for the wants of the community, and handed the money to M. Rogier, who paid it in on account of the sum due for the house.

M. Rogier, however, refused to give the holy man a receipt, and Abbé Clement, fearing that the latter might lose his money, gave him an acknowledgment of five thousand two hundred francs.

Abbé Clement set about putting the house in order and organ-

izing his work with a sort of feverish activity. The bailiff of Saint Denis was dismissed, and the seminary for the school-masters was installed by Easter 1709. Three young men who wanted to be school-masters in the country were the first inmates received. The Brothers were to teach them everything necessary, even plain-chaunt. The work seemed to open under excellent auspices.

But, meantime, the father of Abbé Clement had heard of his son's projects, and was not favorable to them. M. Rogier learned this, and, fearing the consequences, advised the young man to get rid of the house. Miss Poignant offered to take it back and return the money she had received; but Abbé Clement would not consent to this. A little later, M. Rogier found a good opportunity for selling it. Abbé Clement again refused. His father urged him to profit by his position as a minor to get rid of his engagements; but he indignantly rejected the proposal, saying he would never consent to defraud anybody.

Blessed de la Salle, in the interval, had undertaken a journey to Provence to visit the houses he had founded there. It was in February 1711. He was received everywhere by the Brothers with delight, by the Bishop with honor, by the people with enthusiasm, for these latter had come to appreciate the immense services his Institute was rendering to their children.

Suddenly, letters breathing anxiety began to arrive from Paris. His enemies had taken advantage of his absence to get up a charge against him, which was certain to ruin him and dishonor him at one fell blow. Abbé Clement had been won over to their side. He was not five and twenty when he bought the house, so he shielded himself under his minority in order to get the deed of sale invalidated, and at the same time to bring on M. de la Salle the odium of having suborned a minor. A petition in the name of Abbé Clement and his father was sent up to the civil lieutenant of Châtelet. The holy man was confounded by this audacity; but he did not complain. He disliked law-suits, and would not defend himself. However, as his honor was compromised in the affair, and

the Brothers were liable to suffer on his account, he handed over all the documents, Abbé Clement's letters, his acknowledgment, and a note of the affair drawn up in his own hand, to some persons whom he considered trustworthy, and whom he begged to see justice done him. Here again the servant of God was betrayed. His defenders were talked over, and gave judgment against him. When he returned to Paris, it was to hear that he was ruined.

On the 23rd of January 1712, Messrs Clement, father and son, petitioned the civil lieutenant of Châtelet for permission to summon M. de la Salle, and this was followed the same day by an order granting the desired permission.

On the 17th of February, letters of rescission from Chancery declared the deeds signed by Abbé Clement null and void, seeing that he had not attained his majority when he made the contract, and had not the necessary discernment to appreciate the consequences of his acts.

These letters were a mere formality and were never refused. To take effect, they needed to be confirmed by the judges, who could reject them if they had not a good legal basis. But Blessed de la Salle would not wait for the end of the suit. Seeing himself thus abandoned by every body, betrayed by those whom he had wholly trusted, unjustly dishonored, threatened with imprisonment, he saw nothing for it but to fly from persecution. He felt he had better hide himself from the world, and then perhaps its hatred would be disarmed. The Paris Brothers were already strengthened in their arduous vocation. The schools were flourishing and had won universal approval; when he was gone, there would be nothing to check their development. His humility took pleasure in this thought, for, while he was the founder and support of the Institute, he fancied himself its great obstacle. So he went away secretly, without saying where he was going, and, breaking off with every one, resolved not to let the world even hear of him again.

Before departing, however, he wished to secure the government of the Institute. Several Brothers were worthy to be charged with it; but none seemed to be so worthy as Brother Bartholomew. By his

fidelity, his watchfulness, his gentleness, his firmness, his piety and discretion, he was calculated better than any one else to maintain order and the observance of the Rule. The mission that was confided to him was a very delicate one. Blessed de la Salle meant to hand over to him the substance of authority, but not the appearance of it. He was to be Superior in reality, without bearing the title. If the servant of God had delegated his powers to him, he would have been obliged to tell him the motive of his departure, and the Brother, passing for his representative, would have been surrounded by the very same difficulties from which the holy man was flying.

By disappearing altogether, without leaving a successor, he seemed to leave the Institute to govern itself, and follow naturally in the way he had started it. The opposition that his direction of it had raised would fall of itself.

Blessed de la Salle had earnestly prayed for guidance as to what he should do; he had tried Brother Bartholomew, and found him faithful, and having confided his plan to him, and given him all necessary instructions, he quietly went away.

A few days afterwards, the Paris Brothers received two summonses, one in the name of Clement, the other in the name of Rogier; the first was dated February 20th, and sent by Messrs Clement, father and son. They demanded that the letters of rescission should be confirmed; that the promises and obligations of Abbé Clement should be declared null, and notably the acknowledgment of the five thousand two hundred francs. They claimed, moreover, the restitution of a sum of two thousand four hundred francs, which they pretended had been given by Abbé Clement to M. de la Salle and M. Rogier.

When M. Rogier saw his friend attacked and on the eve of being condemned, he also abandoned him, and went so far as to accuse him. In his summons of March 14th 1712, he asked to be put in possession of the house of Saint Denis, bought in by M. Rogier in the name of the holy man, who must now pay for it a second time if he wished to become the owner of it. He claimed in-

demnities also for the verdicts pronounced in favor of the two Clements, jointly with M. de la Salle. As we see, M. Rogier had gone over to the enemy, and done more than merely abandon M. de la Salle.

The absent are always in the wrong, and nowhere is the truth of this proverb made clearer than in law-suits. On the 4th of May and the 15th of June, judgment was given against Blessed de la Salle by default. In the verdict in favor of Clement, M. de la Salle was " forbidden to exact from infants in law such deeds or money. " With one stroke, the holy man was ruined and disgraced by his friends.

Justice, it is true, overtook the culprits later. Abbé Clement suffered the penalty of his cowardice; he was condemned to the galleys for fraud against the State. M. Rogier was seized with remorse. When he died, his will contained a legacy of an income of three hundred and sixty francs bequeathed to Blessed de la Salle " from a conscientious motive. " These last words are eloquently significant, and we will let them close the account of an incident in which the virtue of the servant of God was severely tested, and from which it came out beautiful and triumphant. The reparation came late; but the Saints know how to wait. As it has been said by an author of our time, " people are apt to say that evil triumphs in this world; but it is only because they do not look long enough. "

It was from the South that consolation came to Blessed de la Salle. He arrived at Avignon towards the end of Lent 1712. Everything smiled on him, at first, and his journey was one long triumph. It seemed as if these people wanted to console him for all he had suffered in Paris. The Brothers kept him as long as they could. They wished to enjoy his presence to profit by his conversation, and, moreover, they dreaded the journey for him over the Cevennes, which were just then infested by robbers.

He left them, however, and reached Alais without accident. Providence had sent its angels to guard a life from which it expected to reap such a rich harvest yet. The Bishop of Alais received him with great honor, and spoke in high praise of the Brothers and their school. Since they had been settled in the town, the number of heretic children had sensibly diminished.

After a few days' stay, the holy man set off for Vans, passing by Gravières, whose prior was spiritual director of the Brothers of Vans. He was full of veneration for the holy founder whose virtues he saw reflected in the souls of his disciples, and he detained him as long as he could. In order to testify his esteem for him, he served Blessed de la Salle's mass in his surplice; but honors, as we know, were just the things to make his guest run away.

He arrived unexpectedly at Vans, where his presence caused great joy to the Brothers. In this little town, hid away in the mountains, they never dreamed of receiving a visit from their father, whom they had not seen for years. He uplifted their courage; then, setting out by bad roads in a rigorous season, he reached Mende, where five years ago he had founded a school.

The Bishop who had received the Brothers then, M^r de Riancourt, had long been dead; but his successor had inherited his zeal and his devotion to the schools. He bore almost the same name as the holy man, without being any relation to him, and was called M^r Baglion de la Salle de Saillant. Full of esteem for the servant of God, against whom he had not yet been prejudiced, he wanted to receive him at his table; but Blessed de la Salle declined, alleging that it behoved him to set an example to his disciples of inflexible observance of the Rule.

After some time spent in this town, he returned to Vans, passing through Uzès, where he had business with the Bishop under whose jurisdiction the Brothers of Vans were. This prelate would not allow the Brothers to be moved about. He maintained that they did more good by remaining in the same place, where the children and the population knew them, than in running from town to town. This Rule was wise, but open to exceptions. Blessed de

la Salle had no notion of moving the Brothers without reason; but he was master, and various causes might make it necessary to call away a Brother immediately without its being desirable to explain to him why. Without this right, the discipline of the Institute would be seriously compromised. The Bishop of Uzès understood these arguments, and promised Blessed de la Salle that he would extend his patronage to the Brothers of the town of Vans.

From Uzès Blessed de la Salle went to Marseilles, where his reputation had preceded him. The school opened there in 1706 was in a most prosperous condition. But, so far, it was the only one the Brothers had there, all the other schools being lay. Many eminent ecclesiastics and distinguished notabilities of the town hastened to pay their respects to Blessed de la Salle on his arrival. They congratulated him on his work, and manifested a most zealous desire to assist him in making new foundations.

It was suggested first that a second school should be opened in the town. The Bishop was anxious for it, and the matter was taken in hand by a zealous Jesuit Father who was preaching Lent in the parish of Saint Martin; he enlarged on the necessity of providing free education for the children of the people, and the advantage there would be in securing the services of the Brothers, who were so experienced and skilful in that arduous work. The Jesuit's appeal had an immediate effect: money flowed in, and the school was on the point of being founded, when a curious circumstance checked the general impulse, and put a stop to everything. It was a Jesuit who had the merit of starting this good work, and the success was due to a Jesuit. But it so happened that the majority of the ecclesiastics who had become intimate with the holy man on his arrival in the town belonged to the Jansenists, and they hoped to draw him into the sect. He, simple and straightforward as a child, did not see through their scheme, but accepted their friendly overtures as disinterested, and had profited by them to do all the good he could; but when they saw him using the zeal of a Jesuit with the same confidence, they drew away in mistrust, and resolved to mar his project.

On the other hand, the parish-priest of Saint Martin, although he could not but esteem Blessed de la Salle, blamed the severity of his direction. The austerity of his life seemed to him a silent but living reproach to priests living in the world, and he would rather have had the school kept by ecclesiastics who, in their free hours, might have assisted the clergy of the parish; so he worked secretly in this direction.

He went to the benefactors, advised them to give their money elsewhere, and, as he was very plausible, he easily persuaded them.

The Bishop was next circumvented. He held to the Brothers, but he was assured that the charitable persons who wished to establish the school were resolved to take back their money if the school was to be directed by the Brothers. The Bishop could not understand the reason of this sudden change; but, fearing to let the foundation fall through, he refrained from interfering. He was, as yet, new to the diocese, and was anxious to keep well with every body. This Bishop of Marseilles was M^r Belzunce, whose name we have had occasion to mention, and who signalized himself by his devotion and his charity during the plague of 1720. He honored Blessed de la Salle highly, and granted him extensive faculties for his whole diocese, in December 12th 1712. The plot was, however, so skilfully managed, that the school was not given to the Brothers, and those who had set the intrigue on foot then came with doleful faces to inform Blessed de la Salle of the result.

He answered with his usual serenity : “ Blessed be God, since, apparently, He so wished it. ” He welcomed those who brought him this bad news, thanked them for the regret they seemed to feel, and went to the chapel to give thanks before the altar and adore the designs of Providence who, doubtless on account of his sins, had not allowed the school to be founded.

Blessed de la Salle had formed another project of far greater importance for the Institute : this was to found at Marseilles a Novitiate which would be a sort of nursery to furnish Brothers to the

whole of Provence. The language spoken there was not the same as that spoken in Paris; the use of French was not yet universal. Moreover, the Novitiate of Saint Yon was very far away, and barely sufficed for the schools in the midst of which it was situated. Marseilles was a rich and pious town, and served as a passage to numbers of pilgrims going to Rome and coming back. It ought to be easy, he thought, to find the necessary funds amongst the multitude of persons whose piety led them that way, and also to meet with vocations which were likely to develop in face of a work so calculated to stimulate the zeal and charity of Christians. Blessed de la Salle confided his hopes to Brother Drolin, and already reckoned on this foundation to send him a companion¹. "It will be difficult for me," he writes to him in July 1712, "to send you a Brother until I have started the Novitiate in this country. I am just about to begin it; they want to have people of the country on account of the language being different to that of France."

Blessed de la Salle also wished this Novitiate to be a place of retirement where the Brothers could come from time to time to renew their fervor, and excite themselves to a more rigorous observance of the Rule. He had seen at Vaugirard the advantage of such an institution; but Paris was too far off, and journeys were too expensive to make it possible for the Brothers who lived in the South to come there. Moreover, the holy man had no longer any links with Paris; he looked upon the masters there as lost to him, and although he had retained the remote direction of Saint Yon, he could not think of sending the Brothers from Provence there.

There were, consequently, many solid reasons for founding a Novitiate at Marseilles, and when the servant of God had thought the matter over, he mentioned it to several persons with whom he was acquainted, and all heartily approved of it; not only did they approve of it, but they set to work at once to help him to carry

¹ Archives of the Institute. Letter n° 7.

out the plan. Some gave sums of money, others subscriptions, the parish - priest of the town took it up, the Bishop promised his protection, a house was found, hired, furnished, novices presented themselves, and the Novitiate was installed towards the month of September 1712. It seemed as if the new friends of the holy man had no other care but to further his designs, for they gave up every other work to devote themselves to this one.

Blessed de la Salle was delighted at this extraordinary success, but he was also surprised at it, for he did not recognize in it the ordinary mark of God's blessing on a work. Hitherto, all his undertakings had been realized amidst contradictions and obstacles. They were raised on the foundation of the cross. By what prodigy was this law now reversed, and how came it that a Christian work found so many ready to forward it? The holy founder was not obliged to solve this riddle, and while making ready in his heart for a sudden reverse of the wheel of fortune, he applied himself with great activity to profiting by the opportunity of the moment. His first care was the forming of the novices. He took up his abode in their house, lived with them, and initiated them into the secrets of Christian life. He did, in fact, what he had already done so successfully at Vaugirard and at Saint Yon. He wished, moreover, that the Brothers who taught in the schools of Marseilles should come every day during their intervals of leisure to warm themselves at this glowing hearth, and learn there habits of regularity and discipline.

Meantime, the servant of God had become more and more an object of suspicion to the Jansenists, who were anxious to find out exactly what his views were. They surrounded him with the closest attentions; they tried to elicit his opinions, employing alternatively caresses and threats to induce him to commit himself. If, they said, he became their ally, they would place all their resources at the disposal of his institute; they would found schools everywhere, find friends and protectors for him all over the kingdom, and get him the entire youth of France to educate. They went so far as to promise to get him made Bishop. If, on the

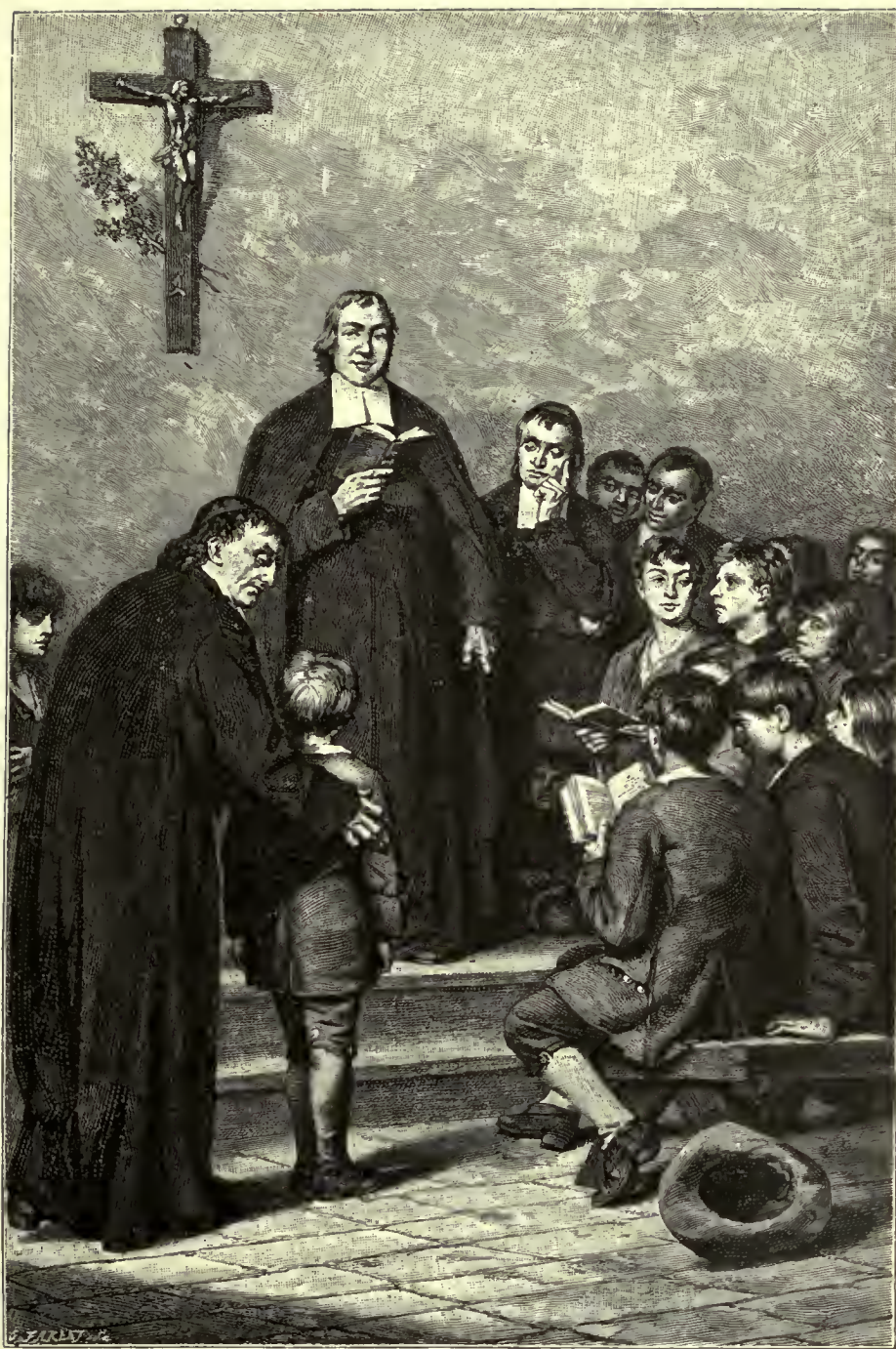
contrary, he stood against them, they had influence enough to crush his work.

It was thus that Satan did when he transported Christ to the top of the mountain; he said to Him : " I will give thee all the kingdoms of the earth, if thou wilt fall down and adore me." Like his master, Blessed de la Salle resisted the tempter, and refused to betray truth, whatever were to be the reward.

The Jansenists held conferences, and invited him to assist at them. Before he had found out their intrigues, he had promised to go; but he was astounded at what he heard.

So long as they spoke of God, their language was irreproachable; but when they touched on the Pope, on grace, on relaxed morality, their tone changed. Pride and anger took the place of faith, and heresy was visible in all its hideousness. Blessed de la Salle had always been very devoted to the Holy See; he had never given into the new opinions, and had even preferred to lose the favor of the Archbishop in Paris rather than have anything whatever to say to them. He was not going to change his principles at Marseilles. He began by observing a stern silence on hearing these discourses. Pressed to say what he thought, he spoke with moderation, but with firmness. He upheld the persons and the truths that were attacked, and ended by saying that violent discussions were productive of no good, that the right cause had nothing to gain, and charity everything to lose by them. Several meetings led to the same result. The Jansenists saw that they could not hope to win over the servant of God, so from that moment they resolved to destroy him.

When people are seeking an opportunity to injure any one, the opportunity is soon found. Blessed de la Salle had arranged that the teaching Brothers were to come every day to the Novitiate to follow the spiritual exercises. These Religious after a while grew tired of the regular discipline imposed on them by their Superior. Not venturing openly to disobey him, they bethought them of having recourse to the benefactors of the foundation to get themselves dispensed from this daily attendance. They alleged that





the schools suffered from it. Moreover, they themselves were masters, and no longer novices. These exercises were, therefore, not necessary for them, while they obliged them to go several times a day from the school to the Novitiate, to the grievous prejudice of the children to whom they wanted to devote their whole time.

These arguments were childish. The holy founder of the schools had no notion of harming the children, seeing that their good was his supreme preoccupation; but he knew that it was zeal, not time that the masters lacked. It was not time lost, the hour that was given to uplifting their courage and forming them for their responsible duties. Moreover, the servant of God was always careful to choose the moment when the class was over, and their absence could not interfere with the duties of the day. This hypocritical behaviour of the Brothers made its impression on the patrons of the school, who at once requested that they should be dispensed from the exercises of the Novitiate. Such a request was equivalent to an order, and Blessed de la Salle was compelled to yield, though not without inwardly mourning over this blow dealt at his authority.

The complaints did not end here. The rebellious Brothers, in order to justify their grumbling, insinuated that the Novitiate was doing great harm to the school, that Blessed de la Salle was pouring into it all the money destined for the school while he left the latter barely enough to subsist on. The Novitiate itself, moreover, they alleged, was badly directed, M. de la Salle being a harsh and very odd man; he was crushing the novices under the weight of an intolerable Rule, and as he was obstinate and wilful, there was no obtaining from him either concession or dispensation.

These calumnies were spread abroad, and were cordially welcomed and propagated by the enemies of the holy man. His conduct being unassailable, they accused him of being over-virtuous. These ferocious Jansenists, these enemies of relaxed morality, belying their own principle, blamed his austerity.

All that they had hitherto praised now became the subject of their ridicule and censure. The modest demeanour of the Brothers was now "a cowed look that reflected the slavery of their souls." Not satisfied with spreading these reproaches in the town, so as to dry up the source of the alms on which the foundation lived, the enemies of the man of God carried them into the heart of the Novitiate itself, in order to sow rebellion and discontent there.

In all religious houses, there are to be found men of weak character, quick to murmur, and eager to accept the seeming pity which some people extend to them on account of the life they have embraced. The novices, finding themselves pitied, thought they must be unhappy. A few of them left, and, to excuse their desertion, exaggerated the austerity of the life. The zeal of the benefactors was not proof against all these attacks. Some gave less, others stopped their alms altogether, and want began to make itself felt in the Community.

The enemies of Blessed de la Salle, seeing his work shaken, thought the moment was come to strike the last blow. They published an infamous libel in which was set forth everything that calumny had invented against him. This production was spread in all directions, and the public, as usual, opened its ears to the evil, and shut them when the accused tried to defend himself. For the holy man, feeling the power of his adversaries and the injustice of their attacks, had published a defence in which, without infringing the lines of perfect charity, he proved clearly the falsehood of the charges brought against him. No one read him, no one believed him, and falsehood went on its way.

The Novitiate began to lack subjects. The firmest Brothers were shaken in their trust. Everyone was turning against their Superior : he must be guilty, for he alone could not be right and everyone else wrong. The other schools of Provence felt the countershock of this formidable attack. Blessed de la Salle had been through them all, and had reformed abuses, and established perfect discipline in them; but reformed abuses leave behind them a virus of discontent which it is often difficult to get rid of; all those who

had been censured or corrected made common cause with the holy man's enemies. They began to murmur against him, and to ask what he meant, this importunate reformer who came to give trouble, and leave disorder in his wake. Before he came, the schools were flourishing and developing admirably; he had only come to destroy and to disedify. The two Brothers of Marseilles were the leaders of this mutiny. They were stirring up animosity against the servant of God, and striving to compel him to leave the town.

His first movement was to fly to God to take his part against the injustice of men; he went into retreat, and sought in prayer and penance the consolation he found nowhere else, but even this humility was turned against him. He was accused of abandoning his Institute. At last, he resolved to bow to the storm, and go away to Rome. Brother Drolin had been there for ten years, trying to make a foundation, and to have a school under the direction of the Pope. He had succeeded after endless difficulties; he was alone, and Blessed de la Salle's presence might be of great use to him as well as to the entire Institute; moreover, his piety inclined greatly to the journey. He longed to pray on the tombs of the Apostles, to offer up his sufferings there where the martyrs had suffered, and to seek light for his guidance at that great centre of light whose rays illuminated the whole Christian world. Since he was driven out of Paris, momentarily useless to his Brothers, and had been led by Providence to a town which was only separated from Rome by a few days' journey, the opportunity was favorable, and he felt he ought to take advantage of it. He engaged his place on board a ship, chose a Brother to accompany him, bought the necessary provisions, and waited till a fair wind should enable the ship to set sail. The voyage would rest him after his long spell of trouble.

In all his plans, Blessed de la Salle kept himself under the hand of God, trying always to maintain his heart in that perfect indifference which accepts with joy all the events that Providence sends. The ship was going to sail, and nearly all the passengers

had gone on board. The servant of God was on his way thither also, when he met the Bishop of Marseilles, who begged him to give up the voyage; he meant, he said, to give him a school in the parish of Notre Dame-des-Acoules. Cheerfully, without a murmur, the holy priest obeyed, went back to the house, and in answer to the astonished Brothers, exclaimed : " God be praised ! Here I am back from Rome. It is not His will that I should go. He is going to employ me at other work. "

He then wrote to Brother Drolin these simple words : " I should have dearly liked, my dear Brother, to go and see you, and I was near going. But a matter has come to my hand here which delays my voyage, for it is urgent; and yet it has not succeeded. "

And so it fell out; the school of Notre Dame-des-Acoules was not founded then, owing to the ill-will of the holy man's enemies.

The trials of the Saints, and the difficulty of doing good are the grand argument of unbelievers. And yet it hardly needs faith to explain it away; reason alone suffices. The current of the world is evil. Everyone is seeking his own interests and pleasures at the cost of his neighbors. God is forgotten by the crowd, and to the Christian this world looks like an immense workshop where men are working away with all their might to invent sin. If one of them breaks off from the general work, and announces that he is going to do the contrary of what they have all been doing up to then, is it surprising that he should be cried down and contradicted? His example condemns the others, his presence becomes a hindrance, his work interferes with theirs, and paralyses it. They are at once enemies, and the strife begins; it never ceases, and as the deserter is alone, he is for a long time the weakest, and is at first knocked down.

Then it is that narrow minds are scandalized. They ask if, in truth, God interferes in the affairs of this world, since it is so hard to do good here, or if events are not the result of fatality, of human will, crossed now and then by some strange coincidences which

superstition interprets as a Divine action. These conclusions are, however, only the result of superficial observation, or short-sightedness. The action of Providence is real, universal, unceasing, and always visible to those who look for it. Because, forsooth, we cannot read, does that prove that there are no books? Our vision is too bounded to embrace in their unity the desigus of God in the world. They are a half revealed poem of which we can only see



Saint Maximin, where Blessed de la Salle halted on his way from Marseilles to Mende (p. 367). — Drawn by Thadée.

fragments. Many dramas are begun in the mystery of conscience where no human eye can penetrate; when they burst on the public gaze, there has already been enacted a long series of invisible facts of which the visible result is but the culmination. Like those stars that come we know not whence, and shine a moment, and disappear, they flash across the visible atmosphere of history, and finish after us, far from us, in depths where our gaze cannot follow. How could we reconstitute a single life, and how much less understand the inextricable tangle of those millions of lives that succeed and cross one another, all serving the glory of God, sometimes in spite of themselves?

We see, nevertheless, enough to understand at least the existence of that wondrous design whose beauty we shall never be permitted to see in this world. Let us, instead of prying curiously into the world around us, turn our gaze within ourselves, and recall the series of events that have made up our life, and we shall recognize how wise and kind was the Will that directed them!—The past grows clear to us, because, seeing it from a distance, we embrace the whole better. How many things have seemed utterly incomprehensible, things against which our will revolted while they were being accomplished, but which we can now see were essential links in our moral progress, the sole aim of all our efforts. And yet we do not understand all. At every step, we come upon a mystery.

Seeing all his undertakings thwarted, Blessed de la Salle felt weariness and sadness invade his soul, and he began to doubt whether his work was acceptable to God, or whether he was the instrument designed for its accomplishment. He left Marseilles, having confided the Novitiate to Brother Timothy, a most pious man, who, after Brother Bartholomew, was destined to govern the Institute. The servant of God withdrew to the hermitage of Saint Maximin, a solitude in the bosom of the mountains, some ten leagues from the town. Here, he redoubled his prayers and penances, that God might carry him through his trials, and enlighten him how to act. But the consolation he sought was denied him. His soul remained clouded in darkness, his heart, once so ardent, was cold, and heaven seemed deaf to his cries. The Saints have these hours of anguish, when God and men forsake them, and, alone with their weakness and their sins, wherever they turn, they see themselves abandoned. Our Lord Himself, their master and model, passed through this trial, and had His night of agony on the mount of Olives. Blessed de la Salle continued to pray, and his prayer, pure from all taint of self, only rose the higher in the eyes of Him who judges men not by what they feel, but by what they do.

And so the days passed. The enemies of the holy man, who,

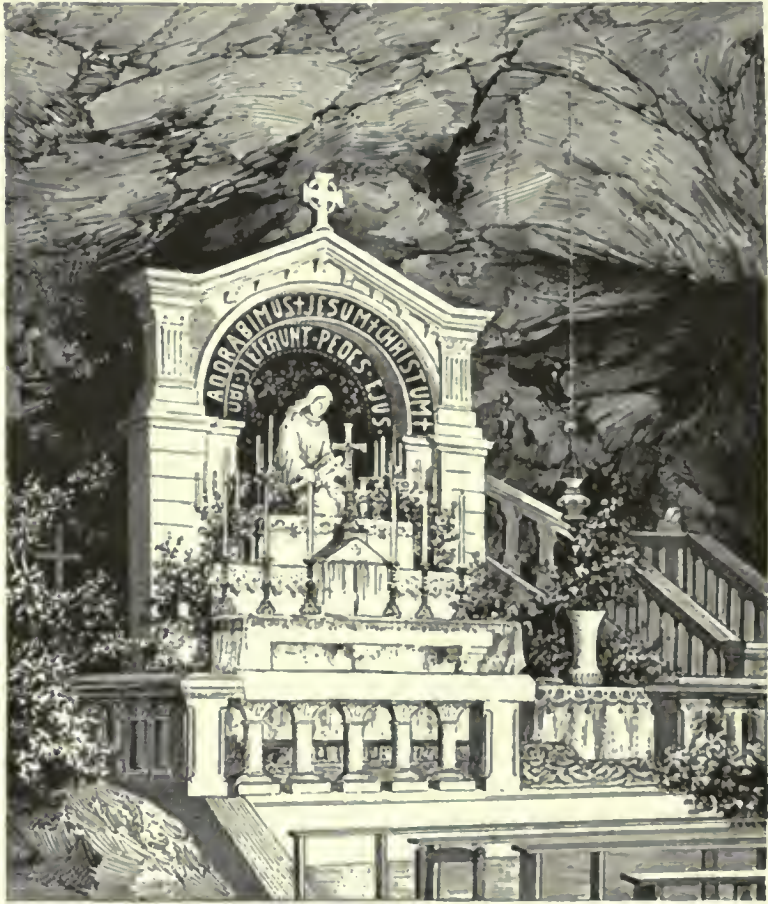
while he was there, accused him of misgoverning the Institute, accused him of abandoning it when he made up his mind to go away. One accusation was as unjust as the other. He did not forsake the Brothers, but believed he could no longer help them except by praying for them. "I am persuaded," he said, "that my absence may calm my enemies, and inspire them with kind thoughts for my dear children."

And with this belief, he resolved to go still farther away, and to retire to Mende, where, on his way, he had met with such an affectionate welcome. He set out, tramping on foot, like a pilgrim, over the forty-six leagues that separate Marseilles from Mende, and only spending during the whole journey seven francs and ten cents. He hoped to be received there as on his former visit. But times were changed. When he knocked at the door, he met with a cold welcome from the Brothers. They gave him to understand that they were poor, that they had barely enough for themselves, and that he brought them a useless mouth to fill. One of them went so far as to accuse him of the persecutions that weighed on the Institute. It was his incapacity for governing, they said, that was the ruin of the houses at Marseilles. Did he intend to go travelling about to sow want and misfortune on his way? The blessed pilgrim received without a murmur these cruel taunts, and as he had not wherewith to pay for the bread his children grudged him, he went away to the Capuchin Fathers, and then went out to search for some charitable soul in the town who would consent to help him.

There happened to be at Mende a pious person named M^{lle} de Saint Denis, rich and of good position, who had devoted herself wholly to the education of heretic children. She had drawn round her a number of other ladies, and they had formed themselves into a community called "The United Ones."

M^{lle} de Saint Denis, having heard of the outrage offered to Blessed de la Salle by his own disciples, was deeply moved to pity and indignation. She sought out the holy man, got ready a lodging for him, provided for his necessities, and even offered to take

charge of his maintenance, if he would consent to stay at Mende for the rest of his life, and direct her little community. The servant of God did not accept the offer. He felt himself called elsewhere, and bound to finish the work he had begun so laboriously,

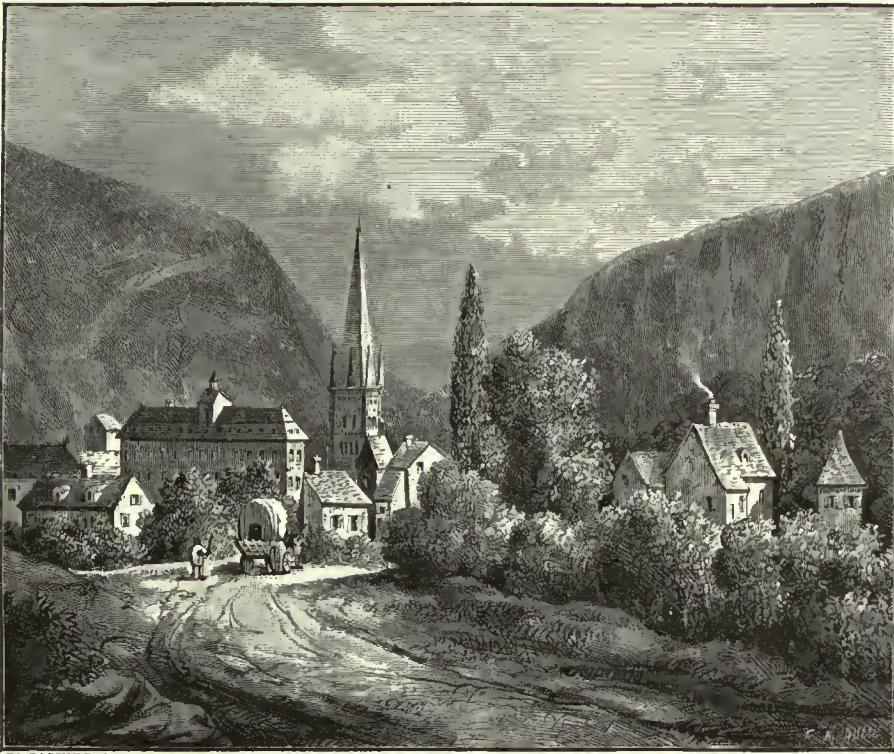


The shrine of Saint Beaume, where Blessed de la Salle halted on his way from Marseilles to Mende (p. 367).
— Its present state. — Drawn by Thadée.

and over which he had already shed such abundant tears. He only stayed two months at Mende, but he took advantage of his sojourn there to direct M^{lle} de Saint Denis, and give her a Rule for her community.

While he was at Mende, there arrived to see him that Brother Timothy whom he had left in charge of the Novitiate at Marseilles. The persecution had not come to an end with the departure of the

holy founder. His enemies were bent upon completing the ruin of his work; they had checked vocations, dried up the fountain of alms, and the house had been closed. Brother Timothy then set out to find his superior. On arriving at Mende, he naturally went straight to the house of the Brothers; but he was received no better than the holy founder had been, and was informed that they



Ed. GARNIER del.

Mende. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Meaulle.

had no room for him. Surprised at this unexpected greeting, he went away to seek for Blessed de la Salle, whom, after much difficulty he succeeded in finding. He fell at his feet, and with many tears told him all that had happened at Marseilles since his departure, and implored him to return and resume the government of the Institute. The servant of God was amazed to find that he was still remembered and wanted. “Why have you come to trouble my joy?” he said. “I am so happy in my retreat, that I am resolved to condemn myself to an eternal silence.” Brother

Timothy replied that he was necessary to his children. "How can you say that?" retorted the man of God; "do you not know how incompetent I am to govern others? Do you not know that there are many amongst you who will not have me for their Superior? And they are quite right; I am unfit for the position."

Brother Timothy pleaded in vain, Blessed de la Salle was inexorable.





The Grande-Chartreuse. — First view (p. 372). — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Brabant.

CHAPTER XIV.

GRENOBLE AND THE GRANDE-CHARTREUSE (1713-1714).



AFTER spending two months at Mende, Blessed de la Salle went to Grenoble, where he arrived in October 1713. There the Brothers, who were firmly attached to their Rule and full of veneration for him, received him with open arms. He enjoyed great peace amongst them, forgetting men and forgotten of them, and commending his work to God in prayer.

His life was divided between meditation and the practice of the Rule. Retired within a narrow cell at the top of the house, he spent his days and part of his nights in prayer.

In the heart of the mountains, about a day's journey from Gre-

noble, there lies hid away a famous monastery where men bury themselves alive in eternal silence. At that time, especially, they were separated from the world by dense and impenetrable forests accessible only to wild beasts. During three-fourths of the year the snow lies like a pall over their abode. The severity of the climate keeps every one away from the place, so they are left there unmolested. How do they spend their time in this solitude? They pray and they do penance. Their ardent prayer is rising day and night to heaven like purest incense, and spreads a veil before the eyes of Divine mercy, hiding the sinfulness that never prays, and drawing down upon earth the benedictions of heaven. Their penance, borne by the hands of Angels, weighs down the scales of Divine justice against the iniquities of princes and of peoples, and disarms the anger of the Most High. They are the lightening-conductors of our moral life, and their souls, always lifted up to heaven, prevent the thunder-bolt from falling on us. And yet the world forgets them, or remembers them only to mock at them; but this very ingratitude forms part of their merit. They love nothing of the world, and care nought for the things it honors. On a certain day, a ray of Divine light revealed to them the nothingness of the good of this world, and they straightway left parents, friends, honors, fortune, all, to serve Jesus Christ, and practice Evangelical perfection.

St Bruno was their founder. Like our holy man, he was a Canon of Rheims, and, like him, he left the canonry to embrace a life of prayer and penance; but, happier than Blessed de la Salle, he had been permitted to follow his attraction for silence and solitude. M. de la Salle could not pass through Grenoble without going to venerate the places sanctified by the presence of this illustrious penitent. He went there in January 1714, and, at the end of nearly a century, the recollection of his extraordinary piety was still preserved there.

He did not let it be known who he was; he feared the honors that might be paid to him because of his former title, and forbade the Brothers who accompanied him to pronounce his name. All

he wanted was to seek food for his devotion, in venerating the place made illustrious by the virtue of St Bruno, and above all the desert where he had dwelt remote from men and so close to God. He envied the lot of St Bruno, and went from place to place shedding tears, and edifying even those heroic souls so accustomed to the perfection of the Saints. The prior of the monastery, seeing his great love for the hermit's life, invited him to stay and abide there. Without knowing his name, they detected in him a great servant of God. But the holy founder was called elsewhere, and was destined to find rest only in God. He, therefore, tore himself away in spite of the longing he felt towards this silent life, and, after three days passed in this heavenly spot, he returned to Grenoble, and endeavoured to create for himself in the busy town such a solitude as he had envied the disciples of St Bruno. He passed his days and nights in his humble cell, almost always in prayer, and giving to the affairs of this world barely the time that necessity demanded.

The Saints have always done this. Those whose life seems wholly given up to active work, find long hours to devote to prayer. Their existence is a continual communion with God, and prayer is, so to speak, the breath of their soul. At every moment they withdraw into God, finding in Him the light they need for every difficulty, the strength to resist all their enemies, the consolation which lifts them above trial, the constancy they need to persevere in all their undertakings. It is to this the Saints owe that peculiar clear-sightedness which enables them to see all that is required for their work, and that firmness with which they go on straight to their aim. These qualities are not of man, who is wavering and weak; but a man of prayer is no longer a man; God is in him and fills the frail vessel with virtues that seem to be already of eternity. This is how humble priests, poor Religious, who but for prayer would have gone through the world without leaving a trace in it, have, thanks to prayer, carried out undertakings far beyond their strength. It was not their doing, but that of Jesus Christ dwelling in them.

Blessed de la Salle was a man of prayer. At Rheims, in Paris, at Marseilles, at Grenoble, at Saint Yon, he gave the greater part of his days and nights to prayer. His enemies accused him of neglecting his Institute, but he was never better occupied in serving it than in these hours of communion with God. He drew from prayer that marvellous wisdom which enabled him to found a difficult work which so many men had attempted in vain before him. Prayer, moreover, does not diminish a man's time; it rather increases it. On coming from prayer, he sees clearer, and decides more rapidly; difficulties that he would have struggled against unsuccessfully, disappear of themselves; he accomplishes more in less time.

Blessed de la Salle did not neglect his Institute. Order had resumed its reign in the houses of Provence, and Brother Timothy had been named visitor to them. He sent one of the Brothers of the Saint Laurent school, of Grenoble, to carry his instructions to other houses, and in the meantime he took his place humbly in the school, going assiduously to his class, like the lowliest of the Brothers, teaching *a, b, c*, to the tiny children, reading and writing to the older ones, and the rudiments of Christian doctrine to all. Nothing could tire out his patience; his gentleness overcame the most unmanageable tempers, and his perseverance forced the dullest to take in his lessons. He was, in fact, what he wanted his disciples to be, and he presented to them the most perfect model of the master of a Christian school. He would not have himself dispensed from any of the duties. Every morning, he conducted the children, walking two and two, to church, and made them take their places; then he went up to the altar, and celebrated mass with such piety and recollection, that he came to be known in the town as "the holy priest."

From the moment of his arrival, he took care to remain unknown. He neither paid nor received any visits. He had come to seek retirement and rest, and nothing but the necessity of teaching in the school would have drawn him out of his cell. As soon as the Brother whom he was replacing had returned from his

mission, the servant of God crept back into his cell, and plunged again into prayer and meditation. He devoted his leisure to revising his works, and brought out a third and corrected edition of his book "Duties of the Christian."

Just as he had completed this task, he fell seriously ill. The rheumatism which he had suffered so severely from twenty years before, again attacked him. He treated it with contempt, would relax nothing of his customary austerities, and the result was that the malady became violent. He was obliged to lie down, and every limb was nailed to his bed by intolerable sufferings. Fever set in, and his life was feared for. The pious persons who had come to know him trembled lest he was going to be taken from them, and the Brothers in despair gathered round him, lavishing the tenderest care on so dear a life. He alone remained undisturbed. He consoled every one, bearing his pains with patience, and repeating those words of holy Job : " May God be blessed, and may His holy will be done, not ours ! If we receive health at His hands, it is reasonable that we should also accept sickness from Him. May His holy name be eternally blessed ! "

But the remedies applied took no effect, and the malady held on. It became necessary to have recourse to a treatment that was more painful than the disease itself, and which had formerly given him relief in Paris. The holy patient overcame the shrinkings of nature. His disease prevented him from being of any use to the Brothers, and from fulfilling his religious exercises, and, therefore, he held to recovering the use of his limbs. So he allowed himself to be again stretched out naked on a sort of grid-iron under which was lighted an ardent fire that seemed to burn his flesh through. Not a murmur escaped him. After some days of this heroic treatment, he was again relieved. He was at first too weak to go up to the altar, and celebrate his daily mass; so he compensated himself by saying his beads several times a day, and in keeping his soul constantly united to God. His strength returned by degrees, and as soon as he was able to walk, he went to the little chapel close by in the hospital of the Cistercian Monks of Gre-

noble. The moment he was well, he determined to make a long retreat to repair what he called his losses, that is to say the forced omission of his religious practices during his illness. The Abbot of Saléon invited him to make this retreat at Permeigne.

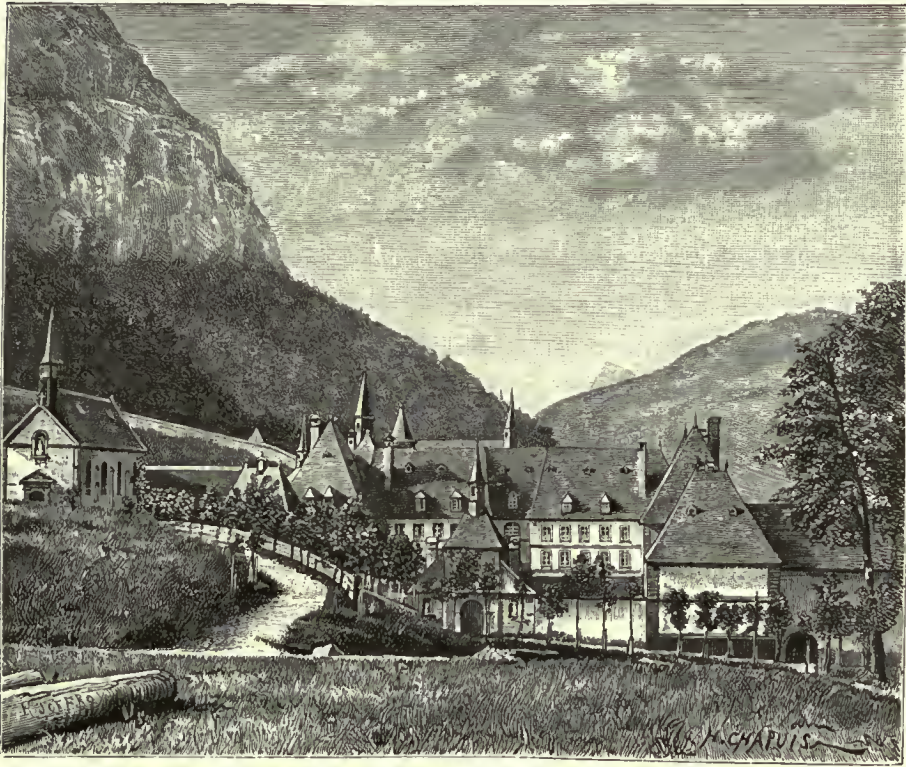
Parménie, in the country dialect Permeigne, is the name of a hill some seven leagues to the north-west of Grenoble, on the right bank of the Isère. This hill, steep as a wall on every side, is crowned by a wooded plain of five hundred feet long and forty wide. From this table, you see the whole of the rich valley of Grésivaudan. At its base are numerous towns and villages—Izeaux to the west, Beaucroissant to the north, Renage to the east, Tullins to the south; but the roads are very rough, and when the snow is on the ground, the solitude of Permeigne is almost inaccessible.

The history of this spot is very ancient. In the seventh century, the Archbishops of Vienne had a fortified castle there. Towards 650, Ramnold, Bishop of Grenoble, flying from the Saracens, who were laying waste Dauphiny, took refuge there, and the Bishops of Grenoble, when driven from their see, were long compelled to seek shelter there from the hordes of barbarians who were over-running the Rhone and its tributaries. Close to their castle, they built a chapel that was served by twelve Canons regular under the title of the Holy Cross; such was the origin of Permeigne. The inhabitants of the neighborhood used to come to pray at the shrine which had often served them as a place of refuge. In 1259, Faucon, Bishop of Grenoble, who had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, removed the Canons of Permeigne, and replaced them by some Cistercian Nuns from the convent of Prémol, who founded a monastery of their order there. One of them, Beatrice d'Ornacieux, died soon after in odour of sanctity, and her relics remained at Permeigne.

In 1400, the soldiery of Louis de Châlon overran the country, sowing death and ruin on their path. The Nuns were terrified, and fled, and their monastery was burned down. Worship ceased to be offered up there, and for several centuries the sanctuary, so

long held in veneration, was abandoned. Ruined alike by the hand of time and of man, it now only was frequented at long intervals by a few pilgrims who kept alive in their hearts reverence for the tradition of their ancestors' pilgrimage to the old shrine.

In 1646, in a little neighboring parish, a child was born who was destined to rebuild the deserted sanctuary. Louise Hours was



The Grande-Chartreuse. — Second view (from a print of a different epoch from that of the preceding one).
— Drawn by Chapuis; engraved by H. Joffroy.

the daughter of poor peasants who were in the service of the comte de Ferrière; her father was game-keeper, and her mother house-keeper at the castle. She was born almost dead; but her mother consecrated her to the Blessed Virgin, asking as her solitary petition that the child might receive baptism. Our Lady accepted the vow, granted the poor mother more even than she asked, for the child lived.

The little creature was brought up as most children of the people were brought up in those days, especially in the countries

where war had made havoc of everything. She got no teaching of any sort, did not learn even the first rudiments of Christian doctrine, and spent her childhood keeping flocks in the meadows and woods, and on the mountain of Permeigne, at the foot of which her parents lived. But God was whispering to her soul, and inspiring her with a great desire to know and serve Him. At the age of fourteen, being very anxious to learn, she entered the service of a well-to-do family of Rives, where she made acquaintance with a venerable priest who taught her the catechism. She stayed there two years, and then came home to her mother, now a widow, and to her young sister, and taught them all she had learned. She resumed her humble occupation of a shepherdess, refusing many offers of marriage, and seeking only solitude, that she might be nearer to God. She meditated on the infancy and the passion of Our Saviour, practised meditation and penance, and made great strides in the way of perfection. Although she was quite alone, she made vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; she cut off her hair, and dressed herself in black with a white cap, which she never afterwards left off. One day, when in prayer, the inspiration came to her to rebuild the sanctuary of Permeigne. She confided the idea to several pious persons who all encouraged it, especially an Ursuline Nun of Saint Marcellin, mother Bon, a soul of great holiness, who sustained and directed her. It was a difficult undertaking. A great deal of money would be required, and Louise had nothing. The consent of the Bishop of Grenoble was also necessary, and he, considering the magnitude of the work and the weakness of the person about to undertake it, was inclined to treat her as a visionary. At last, however, he yielded, and Louise began to beg. A coin of two farthings that she found in the rubbish of Permeigne constituted her first funds. She went begging from door to door, and getting a great deal more abuse and bad treatment than alms. In the town of Tullins, which contained from four to five thousand communicants, she was only able to collect a hundred cents, and this meagre capital was dearly earned. One day it was the lord of the manor who

called her a thief and vagabond, and had her hunted off the premises by his dogs. Another day, she was put in prison. Even calumny attacked her, and the purity of her life was suspected. But she did not lose heart; she begged at Grenoble, at Saint Marcellin, at Valence, even at Lyons, and got together a little money. Her zeal had rekindled the piety of the people towards their ancient shrine. Peasants and workmen came to offer their services. Some gave wood for the beams; others lent oxen and carts to transport it. So the work began, and heaven seemed to be favoring it in many signal ways. Louise toiled at it with her own hands. A little chapel was raised, and blessed by Abbé Canel in 1674, and soon after "Sister Louise" built herself a little hut of wood and boughs, where, in company with another young peasant girl, she lived, practising all the austerities of the monastic life. Without fire, feeding on broken fragments of black bread that shepherds or travellers gave her in charity, she came down from the mountain every morning to hear mass, and passed the rest of the day in prayer. The chapel was built, but it was too small, so Sister Louise went forth and begged again, and got more money, and it was enlarged. A chaplain was now wanted, and God enabled her to find one who consented to devote himself to the painful and humble mission.

But, meantime, the fame of Sister Louise's holiness had spread abroad, and people came from all directions to ask for her prayers and her counsel. She had extraordinary gifts; amongst others that of discerning spirits; she had great lights for guiding souls, and even the secrets of the future were revealed to her. These wonderful faculties drew to the once deserted mountain crowds of people of all ages, and as the village was very far off, the pilgrims were exposed to all the inclemencies of the rigorous climate. Sister Louise, in order to shelter them, resolved to raise two buildings, one for the men, one for the women, with a little chapel. She went out anew and begged. But the Saints are not permitted to realize their holiest plans without many trials. Louise was arrested by order of the Archbishop of Lyons, and put

in prison. She was not the least disturbed. She had foreseen her arrest, and she foretold her deliverance. And so it came to pass. The Archbishop soon after recognized her innocence, and had her set free, and to atone for the wrong he had done her, he gave her a large sum of money which sufficed amply to build the two houses she desired.

Sister Louise came back to her hermitage, and resumed her austerities and her prayers. The crowd continued to besiege the door of her lowly cell, and even priests did not think it beneath them to seek her advice, and place themselves under her direction. The Abbot of Sal  on, with whom Blessed de la Salle was intimate, had a property on the mountain. Not far from the hermitage he had a house and grounds, and had invited the servant of God to go there after his illness, for change and rest. Blessed de la Salle went, and stayed there part of February 1714, and took advantage of the opportunity to make acquaintance with Louise. These two souls at once understood each other, and a bond of strong spiritual friendship was quickly formed between them. Sister Louise's divinely illuminated eyes at once discovered the high perfection of the priest that God had sent her, and she opened her soul to him with entire confidence, told him the story of her life, and sought his counsel. She had not led the extraordinary life we know of without struggles of every kind. Demons came to assault her in her solitude, and, above all since the erection of the two houses of refuge, they attacked her with increased violence. Blessed de la Salle consoled her, supported her, and gave her advice the wisdom of which she recognized. He even condescended to tell her of the trials he had had to undergo, the battle he had been obliged to fight, and the doubts that had assailed his soul concerning his great undertaking. He longed to end his days in retirement, to consecrate to God alone the remains of a life that men no longer cared for, and which in the world seemed perfectly barren; but Louise deterred him from this project. She foretold to him that he had still a great deal to do and to suffer, but that, in reward for his patience, he would receive a brilliant and ever-

lasting crown. As to his love for solitude, he was not to give in to it. "It is not God's will," she declared, "and you must not forsake the family He has given you; you are its father, and your lot is labor; you must persevere in that to the end of your days, uniting, as you have done from the first, the life of Martha with that of Mary."

While he was at Permeigne, Blessed de la Salle met M. Dulac de Montisambert, then four-and-twenty years of age, and who was to be known afterwards as Brother Ireneus, assistant to the Superior general of the Institute. Belonging to a noble family, and brought up strictly and in the love of God, the young man entered the army when a mere lad. At fourteen, he was lieutenant of the regiment of Saint Menehould. In the army, he fell under the influence of evil companionship, contracted a passion for gambling, and was led into all sorts of dissipation. He was severely wounded at the battle of Malplaquet, a bullet going right through him. The near presence of death converted him. He remained some time longer in the regiment, edifying his companions and his chiefs whom he had formerly scandalized, and leading an irreproachable life. Finally, at two and twenty, he resolved to devote himself wholly to the service of God, but without any idea so far of what direction he should take. He left the regiment secretly, sold his horse, and came to Grenoble, where he spent ten months nursing the sick in the hospitals, praying in the churches, and serving his apprenticeship to the perfect life. At the end of that time, he presented himself at the convent of the Capuchins, and begged to be admitted as a lay Brother. The Monks asked for his baptismal certificate and the written consent of his parents, and, as he could not produce either, they refused to receive him.

He then went to the Grande-Chartreuse. The Monks here were equally afraid of receiving him without the authorization of his family; they gave as an excuse for not admitting him that he did not know Latin, and so could not say the breviary.

Disheartened by these refusals, he thought of realizing a project he had long had at heart, which was to make a pilgrimage to

Rome and Loretto. He put on coarse garments, gave all his money to the poor, and with a staff in his hand set out on foot for Italy, asking alms, and leading the austere life of a real pilgrim. He visited all the places sanctified by the saints and martyrs, and returned to Grenoble more fervent than ever. But the long and painful journey had broken down his health; he fell ill; when he had recovered, he went to the Abbey of Sept-Fonts, of the order of Cîteaux, in the diocese of Autun, and asked for admittance; but the Father Abbot refused him, saying that God was calling him elsewhere.

He came back to Grenoble, and made another pilgrimage. This time it was to Permeigne, where he made a retreat. The Abbot of Saléon was there at the time with Blessed de la Salle. The Chaplain of Permeigne, who confessed young Dulac, and was aware of his difficulties, presented him to the Abbot, who, edified by his fervor and his virtues, recommended him to the servant of God as a subject who might suit his Institute.

The holy founder first hesitated. He was afraid that his wandering life might indicate an inconstant disposition, and that the young man would not have the stability he exacted from the Brothers: He, therefore, put him to the test, and shut him up in a room, forbidding him to leave it. Young Dulac obeyed without a word, gave himself up to prayer, and remained shut up until the holy man came to let him out. Then, he fell at his feet, confided to him the longing he had to serve God in a Community, and implored him to admit him into the Institute. Blessed de la Salle, seeing his sincerity and the firmness of his resolution, consented without further hesitation.

The director of the Brothers of Grenoble, who happened to be at Permeigne, acquainted him in a few days with the Rule; he cut off his hair, gave him the name of Brother Ireneus, took him back to the town he had edified so long by his piety, and put him through the exercises of the Novitiate. Fifteen days afterwards, he sent him to direct a school at Avignon, thence to Paris, and finally to Saint-Yon.

Blessed de la Salle had accepted as coming from God the advice of Louise, and acted upon it. He resolved to accept whatever new work was offered him. He stayed only fifteen days on the mountain, but he kept the remembrance of those days all his life, and continued to correspond with sister Louise by letters. She could not read them herself, but she had them read to her, and answered them as God inspired her.

Blessed de la Salle returned to Grenoble, and celebrated with his Brothers the feast of St Joseph, 1714. The trials prophesied to him by Louise were not long in overtaking him. The constitution *Unigenitus*, which condemned the hundred and one propositions of Quesnel, had just been promulgated. At Grenoble, as in nearly all the dioceses of France, it was issued by the Bishop, who later on repented of his submission, and retracted.

As soon as the pontifical document was published, Blessed de la Salle wished to communicate it to his disciples. He read to them the Bull with the pastoral letter that accompanied it, explained the meaning of the condemned propositions, and recommended them to bow to the papal decision with absolute submission. He did not even stop here. He was a priest and a Doctor of Divinity, and a decree of the Church being attacked, he felt bound to defend it, and proclaim publicly his entire allegiance. He did this, and showed himself in season and out of season the inflexible adversary of the innovators. In private and in public, he attacked them without quarter. A pious lady of Grenoble having begged of him to examine her library, he perceived the “Moral Reflexions” of Quesnel on the shelves :— “What!” he cried, “you keep a book that the Church has forbidden and condemned! The anathema hurled at those who retain it does not frighten you? Has that book and the example of its author taught you to laugh at the thunders of the Church, and set you free from fear of them as from a childish fear?” The lady, full of confusion, excused herself on the ground of her ignorance, and handed the book to the holy man, who burned it.

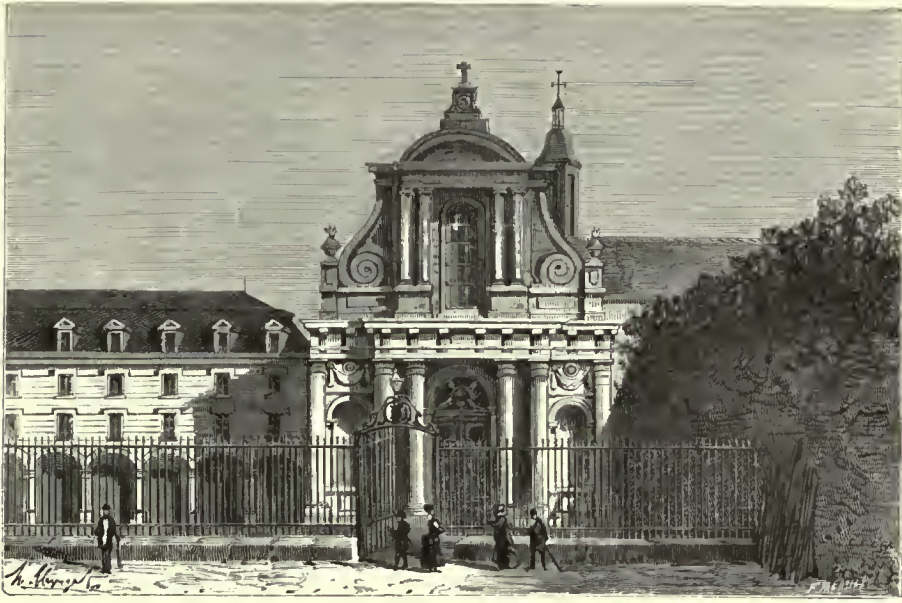
The advice he gave to others he practised himself. In Paris,

as soon as the Archbishop had condemned Quesnel's book, before even judgment had been pronounced by the Holy See, Blessed de la Salle took it down from his library, and sent it to the parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, although, as a Doctor of Divinity, he might lawfully have kept it.

This zeal, which had exposed him to persecution at Marseilles, drew down new vexations upon him at Grenoble. The Jansenist party was powerful everywhere and was furious on seeing itself attacked with so much science and ability. It defended itself with its customary arms, abuse and calumny, and spread the most outrageous reports concerning the holy man. Happily, his character at Grenoble was established beyond the reach of their poisonous shafts.

It was not the first time the servant of God testified his attachment to the Holy See. At Rouen, when his Novitiate was in dire distress, he refused a large sum of money offered him by an ecclesiastic on condition that he would join the party opposed to the Constitution. At Marseilles, again, as we know, he spurned the offer of the episcopal purple rather than betray his faith, and preferred to leave his Institute at the mercy of his powerful enemies. He acted in the same way at Grenoble, and continued to do so to the end.

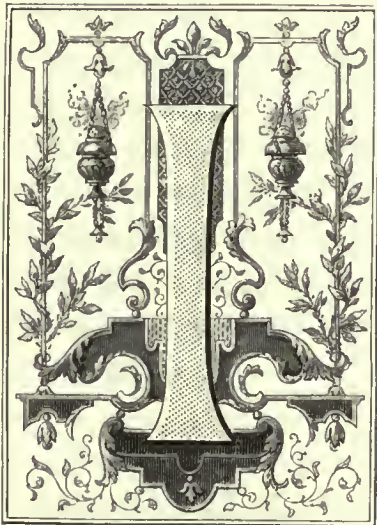




Rouen : Chapel of Saint Yon. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER XV.

FRESH TROUBLES IN PARIS AND AT ROUEN (1714-1717).



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IT was about two years since Blessed de la Salle had left Paris; but, while at a distance, he had kept himself informed of the affairs of the Institute, and, in certain exceptional cases, had interfered by his advice. He had kept up communication with Brother Bartholomew; with Brother Thomas, who resided at Saint Yon, and also with Brother Joseph, while he kept watch through Brother Timothy over the houses in the South. But his direction was naturally intermittent, and almost invisible. Very often the letters of the Brothers did not reach him, and when he received them, he did not always

answer. Considering himself incapable of overcoming the opposition which had triumphed over him, he thought he could serve the Brothers better by prayer and penance, and he wanted to accustom them to do without him.

His enemies had taken advantage of his absence to sow discouragement in the Institute. They had spread the report that he had not been able to bear the Rule he had imposed on others, and that this Rule was to be modified. A certain inevitable disorder had arisen during this prolonged absence of the Superior, and a sad experience has too often proved to all what becomes of a Religious Community when the Father is taken away.

Blessed de la Salle had gone without announcing his departure to any one but Brother Bartholomew. He had not named his successor, and the Brothers, knowing that he was alive, did not dare appoint one. Brother Bartholomew, master of novices in Paris, had a certain practical authority which was turned to account. He was regular, conciliating, beloved by all, and it was to him that every one had recourse when difficulties arose. But, not having any definite and constituted authority, he was often paralysed in his best intentions.

This was the moment chosen by the enemies of the servant of God to introduce into the Institute a change which they had been working at for ten years, and which he had always resisted. They represented to the Brothers that the government was really too heavy for one person, that M. de la Salle himself had not been able to retain it, that no single Brother was capable of taking up the succession, and that, consequently, the whole organization should be altered. In order to understand the disputed point, it became necessary to explain somewhat the spirit of the rules which the man of God had laid down.

His idea was that all the Brothers who were sent to teach in schools throughout France, and even all over the Christian world, were to form one family, who should have but one father, namely, the Superior; one paternal home, the Novitiate; one law, the Rule. All the Brothers, being called to the same functions, were to be

trained by the same method; they were to receive the same teaching, practise the same virtues, imbibe the same spirit, and reproduce, as far as possible, the same type which was that of the founder. In order to realize this unity, they were not only to spend at least one year in the Novitiate, and be there, as it were, cast in the mould of the Institute, but they were to return from time to time and go back into this mould, so that the lines which had been rubbed off by contact with the world might be renewed, and resume their primitive accuracy. Thus the direction, begun during the first year's training, was continued through life. The Brothers wrote once a month to the Superior general; he answered them, and by this means, as well as through the visitors and his own visitations, he remained in contact with them, and was able to follow all the changes in their soul, to encourage and direct their progress, to prevent or arrest abuses. But for this he was armed with a supreme authority. Every Brother who strayed from the Rule could be called back to the mother house, or sent elsewhere. Every budding evil could consequently be nipped the moment it was perceived. This constitution was simple, wise and strong. The best proof of its excellence is its duration. It has lasted for two centuries, with merely a few changes, which are in reality developments rather than changes, and everywhere the results have been admirable. ✓

The Brothers were under the ecclesiastical authority. They were full of deference for the Bishops of the dioceses, and would never have opened a school in one without their permission; they were full of respect for the pastors, and sought their advice, their protection and support. But they were obliged to apply their Rule everywhere, whether for the keeping of their schools, or for their own government; and were forced to resist every influence that was set in motion to alter it. Their system had been carefully considered beforehand by men who had a genius for education and a particular grace for the direction of childhood and who were enlightened, moreover, by long experience, and the system they created certainly was superior to any that could

be imagined as a substitute. Would it have been so if, in every town, the Brotherhood had adopted different customs? What one pastor did, his successor would have undone; traditions would have been lost, and endless abuses would have crept in which it would have been impossible to arrest. The Brothers, sent about from one diocese to another, would have carried their different ways with them, and this would have resulted in disorder and conflict. It would have been necessary to break the bond that united the houses one to another, to attach the Brothers perpetually to their separate schools, and emancipate them from the central authority in order to place them under the immediate direction of the diocesan and parochial authorities.

But, in that case, how were these houses to recruit subjects? Some dioceses yielded numerous vocations, others none, and the advantage of a single Novitiate was to supplement the unproductiveness of one district by the abundance of another. The greater number of the bishops intended to found schools in all their parishes. The council of Trent had ordered them to do so, and they felt the necessity of it. The obstacle came from the lack of masters. They had none, and they could not find men to train as masters. This was precisely what had caused the rapid development of the Institute founded by Blessed de la Salle.

Moreover, at this period, the clergy of France were divided. One set of dioceses was in revolt against the Holy See and carried away by the Jansenist party. If these dangerous heretics had succeeded in getting hold of the education of the people, they would have used their power by contaminating the popular classes, and inspiring them with hatred of the Sovereign Pontiff and contempt for the decisions of the Church.

Blessed de la Salle, who had all his life professed the most perfect allegiance to Rome, could not expose his children to this peril; knowing as he did by experience what it cost to withstand the intrigues of such adversaries, he did not choose that the Brothers should have the same warfare to carry on throughout all the schools in the kingdom.

And what was this constitution that certain persons, well-intentioned probably, wanted to substitute for his? "The Brothers in the various towns should have for superior a priest foreign to their Institute. Each house should be independent, and the Brothers should in each be stationary, without being able to be moved. To repair the losses made by death amongst them, two or three novices should be trained as they were wanted. The central Novitiate should be suppressed. The Paris Brothers should form a distinct society under the authority of an ecclesiastical superior chosen outside the society."

Such was the programme of the enemies of Blessed de la Salle, and it may be said with truth that one more diametrically opposed to his views could not have been devised.

This programme was concocted in Paris, apparently by M. de la Chétardie, parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, and by Abbé de Brou. The historians of the time do not name them, but circumstantial testimony does, and almost all the difficulties which the holy man encountered in Paris arose from his not being willing to bow to M. de la Chétardie's ideas. Many parish-priests were of M. de la Chétardie's opinion. They had hitherto had entire charge of the charity-schools, and had had a great battle to fight against the precentor for their liberty. It seemed hard on them, after this strife of half a century, to lose what they had fought for, and succumb to a new order of things, composed of obscure, ignorant laymen, governed by a strange Canon. The Novitiate was in the parish of Saint Sulpice, and was consequently a charge upon it, without any apparent gain to the parish, whose alms had helped to train Brothers for all the schools of France.

These were specious reasons, and, without being sound, they were of a nature to influence minds not acquainted, as Blessed de la Salle was, with the real needs of education. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice was convinced of their solidity, and defended them energetically. But whatever may have been the good qualities of M. de la Chétardie, as regards the direction of good works, we feel bound to accept the judgment given by the Abbot

of la Trappe to the Abbot of Montigny, concerning the foundations of Father Barré— “ I am of opinion that, regarding those works that are of God, we cannot do better than follow the intentions of the founders. It is they who have received the spirit and the mission, and we must believe that it is by their ministry that God means to declare His will. So long as the first Rules were observed, things prospered, and received a particular blessing; God protected the works, He supported them, He increased them. But experience has taught us that as soon as they abandoned the views of the founders, and adopted other maxims, and struck out roads which had been unknown to these holy men, the holiest establishments degenerated and fell away. Human wisdom only spoiled what had been done, and what was only to subsist by His Divine Providence ‘.

So long as Blessed de la Salle was in Paris, they had not been able to substitute new ideas for his Rule; but when he was at a distance, people resolved to take advantage of his absence to force them on Brother Bartholomew, and so introduce them into the Institute. This was no easy matter, however. Brother Bartholomew was strongly attached to the Rule; he knew, moreover, that he had but a transitory authority, and he wished to return intact to his superior the deposit he had received from him. Nothing could be obtained by force from so firm a character, so they tried cunning. They began by attacking the authority of Brother Bartholomew in all the Paris houses. The Brothers had no endowments and lived chiefly on the alms given them by the parish of Saint Sulpice. The Abbé de Brou, a virtuous priest, but who was imbued with the ideas of the pastor, was named by the Archbishop inspector of the schools. He went often to the house of the Brothers, meddled in everything, and, taking advantage of the power which the fact of his having control of the parish funds gave him, he exercised more authority than even Brother Bartholomew himself. He prevented him from receiving postulants, sent them

¹ *Maximes spirituelles* of Father Barré. — Paris, 1694, in-8°.

away when he thought fit, and managed so well, that when the servant of God came back from the provinces, he only found three or four young men in the Novitiate.

In seeing M. de Brou invested with this authority, the Brothers grew accustomed to look on him as their Superior, and even addressed him as such, which he seemed to like. But a day came when this was not enough, and he demanded the title :— “ You call me your Superior,” he said; “ that is all very well; but you must draw up a deed, and have it signed by the Brothers. ” The Brothers, however, had no right to do this. Their founder had not given in his resignation, and they knew that he was not dead. The Rule, besides, forbade their naming as Superior any one outside the Institute. They ought not to have yielded to this new demand; but they feared that all provision would be taken from them, and this made them weak. The name of the new Superior was accordingly inscribed on the register of the house, and remained there until, on the return of Blessed de la Salle, it was torn out.

Once in possession of his title, the new Superior grew bolder. He determined to make all the other houses follow the example of his own, and to break off all bond between it and them. He tried to persuade Brother Bartholomew that he was burdened with too heavy an office, that he was not capable of conducting so many scattered houses, that even M. de la Salle had broken down under the load. “ How then could Brother Bartholomew, who had neither the age nor the authority of the founder, be so presumptuous as to fancy he could do what his Superior had found it impossible to do? Brother Bartholomew’s humility would not permit him to answer these arguments, and probably in the bottom of his heart he did find the load too heavy. He replied, however, that he could not on his own authority change the constitution of the Institute, that the Rule had been accepted by all the Brothers, and that all should be consulted before any change could be introduced. Those who were endeavouring to draw him into their nets advised him to write to the Brothers Directors of the various houses in the provinces, to beg of them to elect, all in their own place, an

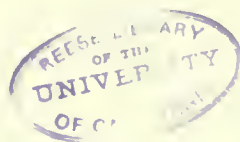
ecclesiastical Superior who would govern them in the absence of Blessed de la Salle, that, for his part, " he was not equal to it. " Brother Bartholomew wrote in this sense, and some of the Directors did as he desired them. At Rouen, Abbé Blain, the future historian of the society, was named by the Archbishop Superior of the community.

But this step had not the result that was expected from it. The majority of the Brothers perceived the danger of the new reform, and pointed it out to Brother Bartholomew. The ecclesiastical Superiors who had been chosen also perceived it. They were interested in the Brothers, and far from abusing the power that had been confided to them to dismember the Institute, they contented themselves with protecting it, leaving the Directors all the authority they had hitherto enjoyed. Even the Archbishop of Paris refused to modify the Rule. M. de la Chétardie and M. de Brou went to him, and presented him with a note they had drawn up of the changes they wanted made. The prelate had it looked into by his Vicar general, M. Vivant, kept it seven or eight months, and on the 4th of April 1714, sent word to Abbé de Brou that nothing was to be touched. At the same time, he expressed publicly his high regard for Blessed de la Salle.

Thanks to this wisdom, no disorders occurred. It is true that a few Brothers took advantage of the circumstance to leave the Institute. But most of them had long been wishing to do this, and were only waiting for an opportunity. Others were old, and attached to their Rule, and thought it was going to be changed; but for all it was a trial which they ought to have withstood. God, however, sometimes, permits the wind to shake a tree that is too heavily laden with fruit; those that are too ripe, or those that hardly hold on the branches, fall to the ground; those that remain, drinking up all the sap, grow finer and more succulent.

Blessed de la Salle was aware of all that had been going on. People had been writing to him from all sides, reproaching him with his absence, and pointing out the disorder it was giving rise to. A few of these letters reached him; but he was not moved by





them. His soul remained unshaken. He had adored in silence the unfathomable designs of God, and contented himself with saying:— “ God be praised! If it be His work, He will take care of it. ” And, indeed, he soon received more favorable tidings. The disturbance was only on the surface, and the Institute was rather more firmly consolidated; nevertheless his return was more necessary than ever. The organization of the Institute, though it had withstood so many shocks, must eventually be weakened if his great influence and consummate experience did not come to the rescue.

Failing to conquer his resistance by their prayers, the Brothers of Paris, Versailles and Saint Denis hit upon a singular device; they resolved to send him a command to return, and accordingly wrote him the following letter:— “ Our dear Father, we, the principal Brothers of the Christian schools, having at heart the glory of God, the good of the Church and of our Institute, consider that it is of the utmost importance that you should resume the care and general guidance of the holy work of God, which is also your work, since it has pleased God to make use of you to establish and manage it so long. Every one is convinced that God has given you the grace and the ability necessary for governing the new Institute which is so useful in the Church, and it is only justice that we should testify that you have always governed it with great success and edification. This is why we humbly pray you, and further command you in the name and on behalf of the community to which you promised obedience, to immediately resume the general government of our society. We remain, with profound respect, our dear Father, your very humble and very obedient inferiors. In faith of which we sign. Given at Paris, 1st of April 1714. ”

The moment had now come for Blessed de la Salle to return to his Brothers; and he no longer hesitated. He took leave of his friends, left Grenoble, stopped a few days at Lyons, studied there the work of M. Demia, went to Annecy to venerate the relics of St Francis de Sales, made a round of visitations to a certain

number of houses, and then set his face towards Paris. Grave events had come to pass during his absence. The parish-priest of Saint Sulpice, M. de la Chétardie, had died on the 29th of June. He had been so unfortunate as not to understand the work of Blessed de la Salle, and to remain hostile to it to the end of his life. But he was none the less a venerable priest, and his will is so admirable that it deserves to be quoted as a model of humility and faith :—

“ I commend myself to the prayers of the holy clergy and the men and women of the parish, entreating them to remember me before the Lord, and to forgive me if in any way I have offended against my duty to them... I declare that I have no gold or silver of my own... Whatever may be found in my house is a deposit confided to me, and which must be given to the charitable confraternities... As to my furniture, it is of very little value... Such are my last wishes in leaving this world, and I leave all without regret, except the Church of Jesus Christ, founded on the merits and mercies of God. I am going away, but I will return; I am going to sleep, but I will awake; I am dying, but I will rise again : I bear with me this sweet hope, and go down into the grave awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen. ”

Two days before his death, M. de la Chétardie resigned his presbytery into the hands of Cardinal d'Estrées, Abbot of Saint Germain, in favor of M. Languet de Gergy, his vicar, who took possession of it on June 21st. M. de Gergy knew Blessed de la Salle, and loved the charity-schools, where he had often taught the catechism. He had been for ten years vicar of M. de la Chétardie, and acquitted himself of his office with great zeal. He had even wanted to sell his patrimony to help the poor. The Brothers hoped therefore to find in him a protector as devoted as his predecessor.

Blessed de la Salle arrived in Paris on the 10th of August 1714. His first words on meeting the Brothers were :— “ Here I am; what do you want with me? ”

They entreated him to take the sole direction of the Institute. This he flatly refused to do. His great desire was that, during his life, the Brothers should establish a government according to their

Rule, lest after his death one should be forced upon them which would change the basis of the Institute. Moreover, his great humility inclined him to fly from honors and power, and he sincerely believed that some one could easily be found who would govern the society better than he did. Then again he felt that he was growing old, and he wanted, like all holy souls, to break with the world in order to unite himself more closely to God.

These reasons were not likely to weigh with his disciples. They had suffered too much from his absence to give up his direction now that he had returned to them. They fell at his feet, and implored him to keep the title of Superior. As to the details of the administration, Brother Bartholomew was accustomed to them, and would continue to attend to them.

Blessed de la Salle could not resist the desire so earnestly presented to him, and was fain to accept the offered burden. He would not consent, however, to manage the house, nor to preside at the exercises. He confined himself to saying mass, confessing the Brothers, making a spiritual discourse to them on Sundays, and spent the remainder of his time in prayer, and in finishing the works he had composed both for the direction of the schools, and the edification of his disciples.

The position of the servant of God in Paris was an embarrassing one. Abbé de Brou had taken advantage of his absence to upset the entire constitution of the Institute. He now wanted to have those changes approved by the founder himself, and to be confirmed by him in his title of Superior; for, without this, he felt that his powers were unstable, and his authority more nominal than real. He therefore drew up a long list of questions which he handed to the holy man, desiring him to give him prompt and full answers to each. He asked amongst other things :— “ Who would be the future Superiors of the Institute?— What were the vows to be?— What were to be the rules of the society ? ”

Blessed de la Salle was not obliged to answer these questions, put to him by a person who had no right whatever to interrogate him. He might have refused, and carried the matter before the

Archbishop, who most probably would have taken his part. But he did not choose to do this. He answered simply each point, except the first, on which he kept silence; for he did not wish either to recognize what had been done in his absence or to commence hostilities. This attitude irritated his adversary very much, and he contrived to have the payment of the Brothers' stipend suspended, and declared they should not touch a fraction of it until they gave him the satisfaction he desired. But, after all, Abbé de Brou had to surrender. He came at last to understand that Blessed de la Salle was the founder of the Institute, and should alone have the direction of it. Some time later, the parish-priest of Mende having written to Abbé de Brou for news of the Brothers, he replied :— " I laid before M. de la Salle what you did me the honor to write to me; he intends to see to it. He seems rather embarrassed to find good subjects for your town in place of those you have lost; but he has a real affection for that school, and means to attend to the matter at once. This is all I can tell you about it, for since he has been in Paris, I have thought it better to hand over to him the government of the society, which I only took charge of during his absence¹. " The divergence was therefore now at an end, and Blessed de la Salle had resumed the direction of the Institute.

Some time after his return to Paris, a young Lutheran convert, the chevalier d'Armestat, entered the Novitiate. He was a German of illustrious birth, who had served in the armies of the Empire under Prince Eugene; he had been several times grievously wounded, and cured by those mysterious signs known as " the secret. "

After the battle of Denain, he left the service, and came to France. One day, he was passing through Lyons, and heard that a possessed person was being exorcised in a church. The religion of his childhood, and his sojourn in camps had made him sceptical; he did not believe in the existence of demons, and was curious

¹ The letter is in the Archives of Mende, and is dated, " Paris, 5th of October 1714 ".

to assist at this odd ceremony which he looked upon as a trick. So he went to the church, and got as near as he could to the possessed woman. She suddenly turned round, and looking at him with terrible eyes, cried out, in a voice that shook with rage:—“ Ah! thou dost not believe in demons! Wait. The day will come when thou shalt feel their fury! ”

This address made a profound impression on the young man. He was a stranger, absolutely unknown, and no one could have revealed to this woman the sentiments hidden in the bottom of his heart. He withdrew greatly disturbed. His mind, hitherto turned away from religion by the excitement of war, now reverted to it; he wanted to be instructed, to study this Catholic doctrine which he had always despised, so he went to the Archbishop of Lyons, who gave him masters and guides. In a few months, he was thoroughly converted, and abjured Lutheranism.

From Lyons he came to Paris, and addressed himself for direction to a priest of Saint Sulpice who advised him to enter the Novitiate of the Brothers. He was received there on the 8th of October 1714, and began the next day to follow the exercises of the novices. It was here that the demons were waiting for him. All his wounds re-opened, and he was seized in his whole body with horrible pains. The Brothers, hearing him groan and cry out, thought at first that he was bewailing his sins; but the next morning, not seeing him at the exercises, they went to look for him, and found him in his bed, motionless, covered with blood, and unconscious. Remedies and restoratives were applied, but his case seemed so hopeless, that Extreme Unction was administered to him. Scarcely had he received the sacrament than his wounds closed, he regained consciousness, and was soon well and able to follow the Rule of the house. This malady struck all who saw it as extraordinary. Fresh attacks recurred. The chevalier d'Armestat again lost consciousness, vomited blood, and rolled his eyes horribly, gazing fixedly at a cross that was in the room, and gesticulating with his arms as if to ward off some invisible person who was aiming blows at him. He seemed to be looking at some

frightful vision. The whole night passed in this way, then he fell into a sort of lethargy which lasted four hours. In this state he saw the demons threatening him with all kinds of torments if he persevered in his vocation. Then the Blessed Virgin, for whom he had a great devotion, appeared to him, and, scattering the infernal troop, consoled him. When he regained his senses, he earnestly asked for the habit. It was given him, and once more he became a prey to torturing pains. An invisible hand seized him by the throat as if to strangle him; his tongue grew thick, and he fell into such a state that viaticum had again to be administered to him, and they began to recite the prayers for the agonizing. He rallied once more and was cured, but soon again to fall a victim to a fresh attack. He seemed to see Blessed de la Salle, Brother Bartholomew and the priest who was directing him, all beating him cruelly.

The servant of God took careful notice of this extraordinary condition. He had nursed the poor sufferer with the tenderest charity; he had prayed for him; but nothing availed; the disease seemed to be assuming all the signs of a veritable possession, and in this case it could only be cured by the rites prescribed by the Church. Blessed de la Salle went to the sick man's room and shut himself in with him, and went through all the ceremonies of exorcism, whereupon the novice was delivered, and never felt the least return of his terrible malady.

After the holidays of 1715, the holy founder, seeing that life was too expensive in Paris, sent back the Novitiate to Saint Yon. Perhaps he wished at the same time to set it free from interference that was troublesome and unjustified; so Brother Bartholomew set out with three or four novices in the month of October.

The pious founder remained a month longer in Paris. He wanted to go, but he was embarrassed as to how he should demean himself towards the Archbishop of Paris. The latter was resisting the bull *Unigenitus*, which was beginning to move the whole country. Blessed de la Salle withdrew for two days into his cell, praying God constantly to know whether or not he ought to go to take

leave of the Archbishop. Finally, he decided not to go. The day of his departure, he got up very early, said mass at Saint Sulpice, and went to Abbé de Brou to announce his departure. The Abbé was greatly surprised. He was afraid, too, that, deprived of its Superior, the school would again fall upon his hands, so he set himself against the holy man's departure. He had no right to do this; but Blessed de la Salle submitted to everybody. He obeyed humbly, and went back to the house without saying a word.

Meantime, his presence at Saint Yon was needed; the Novitiate wanted to be organized. The Brothers felt this, and so they went to Abbé de Brou and represented to him the disadvantages that arose to the Institute from his opposing Blessed de la Salle's departure. Amazed at the extraordinary obedience of a man so far above him in age, virtue and position, M. de Brou at once set him free to go. The holy man left immediately, and arrived at Saint Yon in the first days of December 1715.

Here he gave himself up completely to the direction of the novices, and applied to the work which he considered the basis of the Institute all the experience he had gathered during his long government.

Whilst he was absorbed in these holy occupations, he received the visit of two pious laymen, M. Gense, of Calais, and M. de la Cocherie, of Boulogne, who had come on purpose from Rouen to make his acquaintance. He received them, as was his wont, with great cordiality, and took them to a sort of little hermitage he had reserved to himself at the end of the garden. They broke bread together, and passed the day discoursing on the great duties of Christian life.

The two strangers made particular enquiries concerning the new society the holy priest had founded, and the difficulties that had beset him in the task. When they congratulated him on his courage, the holy man replied that it had been all God's doing.

“For my part,” he said with his charming simplicity, “I own to you that if God had shown me the labors and crosses that were to accompany the good I was to do in founding the Institute,

my courage would have failed, and, far from undertaking it, I would not have dared put my finger to the work. A prey to contradiction, I have been persecuted by several prelates, even by those from whom I had a right to expect help. My own children, those whom I begot in Jesus Christ, and cherished with the utmost tenderness, whom I trained with the greatest care, and from whom I looked for great services, rose up against me and added to external trials those interior ones which are so much more acute. In a word, if God had not held out His hand and visibly sustained the edifice, it would long ago have been buried under its own ruins. The magistrates joined with our enemies, and lent them the weight of their authority to overthrow us. As our office offends the school-masters, we have in every one of these a declared and inveterate enemy, and all in a body they have often armed the powers of the world to destroy us. Yet, notwithstanding all, the edifice is standing, although it was so often trembling on the brink of ruin. This is what leads me to hope that it will endure, and render to the Church the services she has a right to expect from it."

Blessed de la Salle, in these few words, summed up the history of the foundation of his Institute and foretold its future destinies. He had sown in tears, and his children, despite those trials inseparable from all Christian undertakings, were to reap in joy. But what a homage he paid at the same time to the omnipotence of grace, which had led him unawares from first to last to the success of a vast enterprise, through obstacles the mere contemplation of which would have frightened him from attempting it! How kind God is to hide the future from us, to employ us like day-laborers, without revealing to us the secret of His designs, thus sparing our pride, which would be puffed up by their magnificence, and our cowardice which would quail before their difficulties.

M. Gense carried away with him a profound admiration for the holy man, with whom his acquaintance did not end here. They exchanged letters, and M. Gense having fought against those who

opposed the Bull *Unigenitus*, Blessed de la Salle wrote to congratulate him. They thought alike; both were animated with the same faith, the same loyal submission to the Church, the same love of the poor, and each at his post was working at the same task, the Christian education of youth.

M. Gense had pressed the holy man to come and see him at Calais; but M. de la Salle excused himself on the grounds of his occupations, his age and his infirmities. There were, however, several of his schools already in the North, and a journey there might be of some use, so Brother Bartholomew begged him to undertake it, and he at once consented. He set out at the beginning of August 1716. He was received with great honor by the magistrates and the inhabitants of Calais, and M. Gense greeted him as his master. He invited him to dine, and wished even to take advantage of this opportunity to have his portrait taken. A painter was hidden behind a piece of tapestry, so placed that he had a view of the servant of God without being seen. He had drawn a part of the face, when he was obliged to lift up his head to catch the whole, and in doing so Blessed de la Salle caught sight of him. He at once assumed a severe countenance, rose and left the table, coldly thanking his host. He went home exceedingly annoyed at this outrage against his modesty. He could not understand what anybody could want with his portrait, and pretended that they had been turning him into ridicule. M. Gense never could persuade him to go back.

His sojourn at Calais gave him an opportunity of showing his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The parish dean of the town had invited him to sing high mass on the feast of the Assumption, and the servant of God had accepted. In the middle of the service, the dean got into the pulpit, to preach as usual on the gospel of the day, but he made no allusion to the feast. He was imbued with the new heresy, and secretly opposed to the honor paid to the Mother of God. Blessed de la Salle was scandalized by this silence, and on coming out from mass, he could not refrain from expressing his displeasure. He went to the parish-priest,

upbraided him with his omission, and burst out into such eloquent praise of the Mother of God, that the culprit felt all his objections melting away, and promised to repair his fault the following Sunday. And he kept his word. He again ascended the pulpit, and discoursed on the mystery with such orthodoxy and fervor, that his audience were astonished, never having heard such a tribute to Our Lady from his lips.

From Calais, M. de la Salle went to Saint Omer, where his presence had long been desired. While he was in Provence, the Bishop of Saint Omer, M^r François de Valbelle de Tourves, who had formed the plan of opening a free school, had gone to Paris in hope of obtaining Brothers. But we know the opinions that reigned at that time concerning the government of the Institute. The Novitiate was nearly empty, and answer was made to the prelate that they had not any available Brothers, nor any hope of being able to form new schools. M^r de Valbelle was not disheartened, however. He waited.

When the pious founder returned, the Brothers told him about this demand, and advised him to re-open negotiations with the Bishop.

At first, he refused; but, yielding to their entreaties, he wrote to the Bishop. He had a most satisfactory reply. M^r de Valbelle begged him to come to Saint Omer as soon as possible, and to enable him to do so, he even postponed the visitation he was about to make in the diocese. But Blessed de la Salle was delayed, and when he got to Saint Omer, the Bishop was gone. The Vicar general, M. Tissot, received him with great honor; he showed him the site on which he meant to build a house for the Brothers, and presented to him the persons who were to provide the necessary funds for founding the establishment. According to his custom, the holy man withdrew at once to the church, where he remained long in prayer, commending the work to God. Next day, he celebrated mass in honor of St Omer, patron of the town. The matter was not concluded at once, however, and the school was not opened until 1719.

From Saint Omer, Blessed de la Salle came back to Rouen, passing by Boulogne, where a school had been founded in 1710 by M. de la Cocherie. It was situated in the lower town, and the house, inhabited by six Brothers, was small and inconvenient. Three years later, the Bishop had opened another one in the upper town, and had asked for two more Brothers to direct it. They then undertook to rebuild the first house. The King had given the ground, the first founders had furnished funds, and everybody had helped. The Marquis of Cortembert, governor of the town, had himself drawn the plan, given the materials, and sent carters who did all the transporting gratis.

At this juncture, Blessed de la Salle arrived, and was received with extraordinary honors. The most important persons of the town wanted to see him, to receive him, to get his advice, to admire this man so sublime by his virtues, so humble in his appearance, so holy in his actions, and who was about to educate the people of France. The servant of God, despite his humility, could not escape the homage that was forced upon him; but he took it all with his accustomed simplicity; he went about so miserably clad, that his friends carried off by main force his tattered old soutane, and compelled him to put on another that was made up in a hurry.

M. de la Cocherie was above all others happy to have the holy man in his house, for he looked upon him as a saint. But all these honors distressed the object of them exceedingly; they displeased him far more than persecutions and insult. He, therefore, departed as quickly as he could, and continued his visitation, leaving the Brothers to reap the fruit of the admiration that he inspired.

No sooner did he get back to Rouen than he made haste to carry out a project that had long been in his mind; this was to resign, and have another Superior general elected in his place. He was only sixty-five years of age; but fatigue and austerities had weakened his constitution, and he looked upon his death as being near at hand. The storms that during his absence had

shaken the Institute and threatened to destroy its spirit, the strife which had arisen about the government of the Brothers, had led him to fear much greater evils if he were to die without arranging about his successor. He longed, moreover, to devote to prayer the days that yet remained to him. After having worked so hard for others, it was only just that he should work a little for himself, and spend some years in silence and retirement, preparing himself for the last and supreme act of a Christian's life.

The Brothers could no longer have any reasonable objection to his carrying out this design. Since his return from the South, he had slipped the direction of the community into the hands of Brother Bartholomew, and kept the title of Superior himself, without exercising the authority of his office. It was, therefore, only a question of transmitting to another a purely nominal dignity. But this transmission must needs be regularly conducted, so as to put a barrier against all possible future contestations; and on the other hand, it was necessary that it should be done secretly, so as to prevent the chance of strangers interfering.

On the 4th of December 1716, M. de la Salle called together the six leading Brothers of Rouen, and told them of his plan. At first, he met with vehement resistance. They loved him tenderly, and were fearful of loosening the ties that bound him to them. He ended, however, by convincing them of the wisdom of his motives, and feeling gave way to reason. It was agreed that one of them should set out secretly on a round of visits to all the houses, and acquaint them all with the motives which made it desirable to have a general assembly, and proceed to the election of a new Superior. Nobody was better fitted for this mission than Brother Bartholomew. He was known and loved by all, and Providence, who destined him to continue the work of Blessed de la Salle, was preparing him for it by this general visit to all the houses of the Institute. He set out in December 1716, going first to Chartres, then to Moulins, then on to the Cevennes, Mende, Vans, Alais, and finally to Avignon, where he arrived at the beginning of January 1717. From here, he went to Marseilles,





returning by Dijon, passing by Grenoble, and visiting the schools of Champagne, Troyes, Rethel, Rheims, Laon and Guise, where he arrived at the beginning of March. He turned his steps towards the North, and visited the schools of Calais and Boulogne. He made the purpose of his journey clear to all the Brothers, and persuaded them all of the wisdom of their venerable founder's intentions. He had brought with him a model of the deed that all would have to sign, giving their consent to the decisions to be formulated at the general Assembly.

Brother Bartholomew was received everywhere with great demonstrations of joy and respect. The renown of his wisdom and his virtues was widely diffused through the Institute, and all were anxious to see the man who, during the absence of Blessed de la Salle, had borne the weight of government. He returned to Saint Yon at the end of March 1717, gave an account of his journey; then after a few days' rest, he set out again to visit the houses of Paris, Versailles, and Saint Denis. His mission here succeeded beyond what could have been expected. One day, he fell from his horse, and his foot caught in the stirrup; he was dragged a long way over the ground, and ought humanly speaking to have been killed; he was not even hurt.

Another day, two robbers accosted him at the entrance of a town, with the evident intention of robbing him; but, arrested by some mysterious power, they could not utter a word, and after following him for some distance, they turned back without laying a finger on him.

A no less signal mark of God's blessing was the fact that he carried away from every house the consent of all the Brothers to the decisions of the approaching Assembly. In order that this consent might be unanimous, Blessed de la Salle had written to Rome to Brother Gabriel, as early as December 1716, to ask for his acquiescence.

The traditions of the Institute seemed to point to the Feast of Pentecost as the date assigned for the general Assembly. At the beginning of the Society, and later at Vaugirard in 1694, the



assemblies were held at this period of the liturgical year. This time, the Directors were all invited to Saint Yon. Sixteen answered to the call. The houses represented at the Assembly were Alais, Boulogne, Calais, Chartres, Grenoble, Guise, Laon, Avignon, Paris, Rheims, Rouen, Darnetal, Rethel, Versailles and Saint Denis. As to the Directors of Moulins, Dijon, Troyes, Mende, Vans and Marseilles, they were not able to come. In spite of these absences, Blessed de la Salle saw his Institute spread out before him like the tree sprung from the grain of mustard seed. It was now a great order.

As soon as the Directors were assembled, he told them the motive for which they had been convoked. They were to prepare for the great act before them by a retreat which was to begin on the 16th of May.

The Servant of God had composed a special prayer to invoke the light of the Holy Spirit, and he gave them the rules according to which they were to proceed for the election, rules chiefly borrowed from the Constitutions of St Ignatius. Then he spoke a word of final advice to them : — “ Purify your intentions and desires,” he said, “ if you want to be the organs of the Holy Ghost to name him who is destined to govern you. Set aside all human considerations, do not listen to the voice of nature, reject false lights, and the prejudices of the human spirit. ” “ Act without any interested feeling, without sympathy or antipathy, without passion or inclination, without natural attraction or repulsion. Keep your hearts in a state of complete indifference, and incline them only towards him who will be set before you by the majority of votes. As it is not you who are to elect, but God in you, and by you, lift up your hearts to him, and weary not in addressing to Him that prayer of the Apostles :— ‘ Show us him whom you have chosen. ’ If you wish to know that chosen one, give your vote to whomsoever your conscience names, to him who is pointed out by merit, to him whom at the hour of death you will wish to have chosen, to him who is best fitted to govern the Institute, who most possesses its spirit, who is best capable of

maintaining order, of keeping alive fervor, and sanctifying you all. Name him who is known to you as the most enlightened, the wisest, the most virtuous, the firmest. Give your vote to him who possesses those six qualities so necessary for governing the family of God— prudence, gentleness, vigilance, firmness, piety, zeal and charity; to him who presents in the highest degree that rare combination of virtues— zeal with prudence, light with charity, firmness with gentleness, kindness with severity; to him who possesses gentleness without softness, vigilance without over anxiety, firmness without inflexibility, zeal without bitterness, goodness without weakness, prudence without cunning. Give your vote to him who is the holiest, or who wishes to become it, who is worthy of being your model in all things; to him who will be the humblest in the first place, who will have the heart of a father towards you, and make his authority loveable. Look neither to talents nor birth in making this choice, nor to age, nor length of years in the Institute, nor to face, nor to figure. Look not at the man, but see God in him. You will choose him whom God Himself has chosen if you seek a man according to His heart, and not according to your own, a man of grace in whom grace acts, and not a man according to your taste, and natural inclination.”

The holy man then withdrew to his cell to join his prayers with those of his children, leaving them free to proceed to their election, and invoking on them the blessing of heaven. Brother Bartholomew was charged to preside over the Assembly and to conduct the exercises. Then, after two days' deliberation all the votes fell upon him, and, on May 18th 1717, he was elected Superior general of the Institute.

This choice did not surprise Blessed de la Salle; on hearing of it, he said simply : “ He has been for a long time the acting Superior.” The election had, therefore, ratified the choice which he had himself made from the first. The only one who objected to it was the Religious on whose shoulders the burden of authority had fallen. He entreated the Brothers to spare his weakness, and

was confused at seeing them come one after another to kneel at his feet and acknowledge him as their Superior. He had, however, to submit, and accept the nomination as the expression of the will of God. He begged for two Brothers to second him in his task, and two Assistants were given him : Brother John, Director of



Louis XIV., from a copperplate print of S. Thomassin (1675). — Engraved by Monelle.

the Paris house, and Brother Joseph, Director of that of Rheims. The retreat was prolonged to Trinity Sunday, which is the great feast of the Institute, and then all the Brothers, with Blessed de la Salle and Brother Bartholomew at their head, renewed their vows.

Acting on M. de la Salle's advice, the Assembly met to examine the Rules with the new Superior, and consider what ought to be

added to them, and what retrenched. Each one gave his opinion with perfect freedom, and it was agreed by common consent that they would refer the matter to their holy founder, and abide by his decisions concerning all necessary modifications. He consented to this, and took the thing in hand. He added some chapters borrowed in part from St Ignatius, and the Rule thus revised was sent to all the houses, with Brother Bartholomew's signature.

While the things related in the last chapters were coming to pass, a great event, whose effect made itself felt all over France, occurred. After a reign of seventy-two years, Louis the Fourteenth died on September the 1st 1715, passing away in that sumptuous palace of Versailles, which he had made one of the wonders of the age. It would be ungrateful towards his memory not to recall here the benefits which the budding Institute of the Brothers enjoyed so amply under the government of that monarch, "whose name had become identified with greatness." Say what we will, Louis XIV. will always be "Louis the Great," and posterity will never forget what he did for France, whose frontiers he extended; for art, to which he gave so many master-pieces; and for the lowly schools where the children of the poor were taught, thanks to him, respect for authority and love for God.





Rouen, where Blessed de la Salle died. — Second general view. (Cf. p. 129.) — Drawn by Hubert Clerget, engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER XVI.

LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF BLESSED DE LA SALLE (1717-1719).



o sooner was the servant of God set free from the cares of government, than he had but one thought, which was to bring to perfection the virtues of humility and obedience that he had practised all his life. He not only refused to give an order of any sort, but he would not do the least thing without asking permission. He left unanswered the greater number of letters addressed to him, and to those who came to him for direction, he repeated :

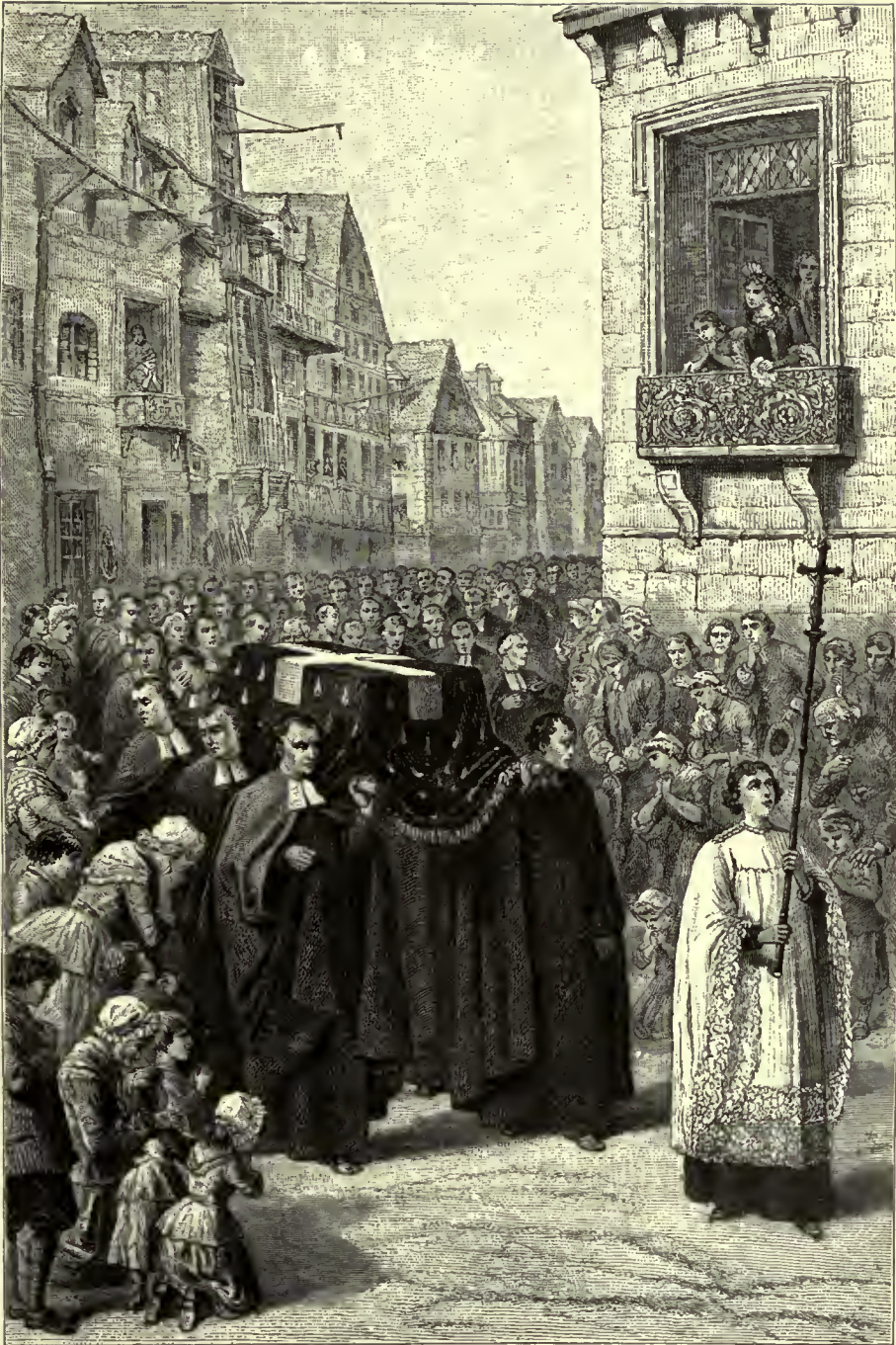
“ I am no longer anything; go to the Brother Superior; ” or else : “ Take care not to look to me for anything; I can

meddle with nothing now; I must think of my sins, and prepare for death."

He considered himself as a sinner, unfit to mix with other men. In the refectory, he insisted on having the last place, after the lay Brothers. At recreation, he stayed humbly with the youngest. He would not leave his cell without a distinct permission. In the midst of all his duties, so faithfully performed, he could not, to use the expression of one of his contemporaries, "disoccupy himself with God."

The only privileges he retained were those of saying mass, confessing the Brothers and the novices, and directing their consciences, but without meddling in the government of the Institute. Even this humility had its trials, so true is it that here below good is never done without suffering. Mgr d'Aubigné had revoked generally the faculties of priests in his diocese, and ordered all those who wished to hear confession to come to him for fresh powers. Blessed de la Salle, who now considered himself simply as the chaplain of the Brothers, did not wish to make this application himself. He thought it was for Brother Bartholomew to do it, he being now his Superior. Brother Bartholomew, accordingly, presented himself at the Archbishop's; but he was badly received. He was told that it was not his business to come and ask faculties for a priest, and that M. de la Salle's humility was out of place:—"If he wants faculties, let him come and fetch them," was the message Brother Bartholomew brought back. The holy man went for them, and received them at once.

The servant of God, throughout his heroic life, had been favored with supernatural gifts that he kept carefully concealed lest any glory should accrue therefrom to him. One of the founders of the Hospital in Canada came to Paris, and wanted to carry back some Brothers with him, and Brother Bartholomew, yielding to his entreaties, promised to give him some. Blessed de la Salle, on hearing this, merely exclaimed:—"Oh, my goodness! What are you going to do? You are going to undertake a thing that will bring you into endless trouble, and have very unpleasant conse-



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quences." He repeated this on two separate occasions. The Brothers had such confidence in him that this sufficed to make them give up their design. And they had reason to be thankful for it, for they learned afterwards that the Brothers would have been exposed to very great dangers.

M. Rogier, that friend who had done so much mischief in the Abbé Clement's affair, had left Blessed de la Salle a considerable sum in his will, by way of reparation, and the holy man was obliged to go to Paris for certain necessary formalities. He at first refused; but the Institute was poor, and in great need of the money, so Brother Bartholomew desired him to go, and he went at once. He reached Paris on the 4th of October 1717. He refused to stay at the Brothers' house, fearing the honors that awaited him there, and went and begged for hospitality at the Seminary of Saint Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, where he hoped to be quiet and unknown, and where he edified all by his piety. The business was a long time getting settled. The holy man refused to accept the legacy with the title of Superior, and the notary had to yield to his inflexible will.

While their founder was in Paris, the Brothers were again threatened with being turned out of the house they had chosen. The Marquise of Louvois, who owned the house they occupied at Saint Yon, died, and the heirs were going to sell it in order to make a division of the property, so they sent word to the Brothers that they must leave. This was a great blow to the Community. They were admirably situated, in fine air, and the house and garden were spacious. Moreover, they had been living there for fourteen years, and the idea of leaving it and hunting for another was painful to them. It occurred to them to buy it. They had not the money, it is true; but Blessed de la Salle had taught them to reckon on Providence. He would not, however, this time take the responsibility of advising them; his humility forbade it. "It is not fitting," he wrote to Brother Bartholomew, "that I should have any share in this business, I who am nothing, while you, as Superior, are master." The Brothers made up their minds to buy the house.

Then the holy man went off to Abbé de Louvois, who had been the executor of his mother's will, and had a great regard for him for sake of the Archbishop of Rheims, M^r Letellier, his uncle. Abbé de Louvois promised to put the house at a reasonable price, and to give the Brothers the preference. The negociation was very troublesome, and was twice on the point of being broken off. Finally, it was adjudged in favor of Brother Bartholomew. Blessed de la Salle refused to figure in it. "I am too old," he said. "I am working to get free from all ties with the affairs of this world."

Providence, on whom the Brothers reckoned, did not, as we see, fail them.

Meantime, the servant of God was the admiration of the holy priests at Saint Nicolas, who after his death bore testimony to his sanctity. Despite his age, he rose at the same hour as the others, and he was always amongst the first at the exercises, at the morning meditation, at the spiritual conferences, and at divine office. In spite of his infirmities, he would not be dispensed from a single point of the Rule, and denied himself everything that approached an alleviation. During this winter that he passed in Paris, he never had a fire in his room. Instead of warming himself at recreation with the others, he used to walk in the garden with some young seminarians whom he was trying to inflame with the love of God and detachment from this world. In all things, he was poor and humble. His clothes were of the coarsest serge. In conversation, he never spoke of himself or of what he had done. He deferred meekly to others, and was always ready to yield to their opinion, seeming to forget all that he had been, and all that he had done. He looked upon himself truly as the lowest in the house.

Jansenism continued to trouble the Church of France, and was the general topic of conversation. Blessed de la Salle took no part in these discussions, which had always appeared to him dangerous to charity and useless to faith. When, however, he was obliged to give his opinion, he manifested a great horror of the new heresy.

and proclaimed his perfect submission to the teaching of the Church and the decisions of the Holy See. He lived above all by prayer, humility and penance. He gave from two to three hours daily to meditation, saying that, as he was a mere novice in perfection, he ought to take advantage of being at leisure in a seminary to learn over again the lessons he had been taught at Saint Sulpice fifty years ago, and which he had forgotten.

He found it hard to leave this quiet retreat. The Brothers were impatiently calling him back to them, but he lingered on at Saint Nicolas. "I am a good-for-nothing," he wrote to Brother Bartholomew, "and the Institute ought to look upon it as a special mercy of Divine Providence to be rid of me." I want to be led, not to lead. It is time I should look after my own sanctification; I have been looking after other people's long enough; since God has given me such a good opportunity, I must profit by it, and if I were to let it escape, I should have to regret it for the rest of my life. I have been commanding long enough. The day has come for me to obey, and I ought to try and teach you all by my example to prefer the state of dependence to that of authority. All things considered, I have a mind to end my days where I am." But this great humility only made the Brothers more ardently desirous of having in their midst the Father from whom they had still so much to learn. They feared that death might overtake him in the house of strangers, and they wished to be near him to close his eyes.

His hosts at the seminary, despite the joy they had in possessing him, and the temptation it was to them to keep him, were compelled to acknowledge that his place was in the midst of his children. Brother Bartholomew at last came to fetch him, and exercised his authority to desire him to return. Blessed de la Salle, docile as usual, submitted without further resistance. Before leaving Paris, he wished to visit for the last time the Brothers there, whom he did not expect to see again. All gathered round him, asking for his blessing. He refused to give it, saying that he was unworthy; but he yielded at last, and then took leave of them, and returned

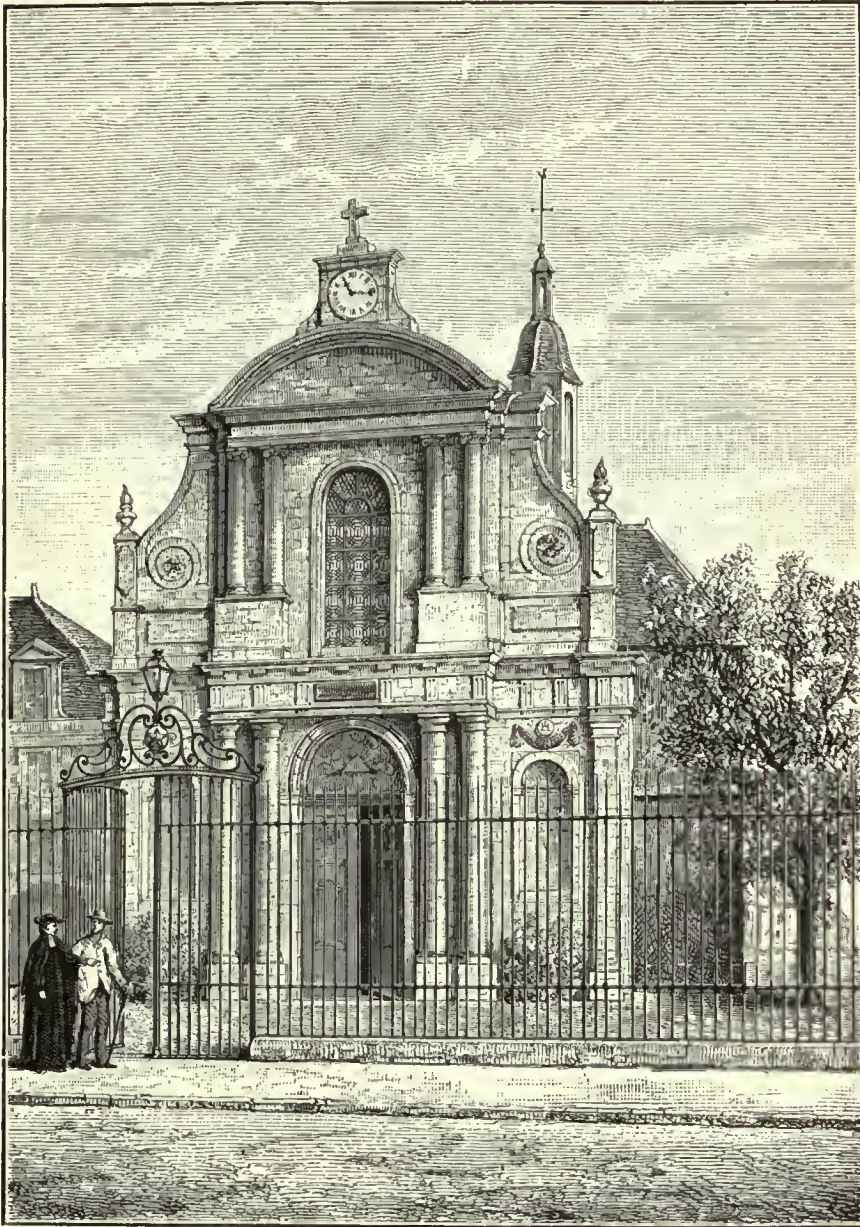
to Saint Yon with Brother Bartholomew. This was on the 7th of March 1718.

Arrived at Saint Yon, he set to work to put everything in order, for he foresaw his approaching death, and had foretold it. On the 11th of August, he transferred several deeds and titles which were in his name. To his brother, Louis de la Salle, by a deed of December the 18th, he made over five houses that he founded at Rethel, that they might be used for the schools of Rethel and Rheims. But above all, he made ready for death by a more faithful practice of every virtue.

His life was more retired than it had ever been before. He had chosen the meanest room in the house, a dark room on the ground floor, opening into the stables. It had been impossible to make him accept any other. At table he would be served last, after the lay Brothers, and it was with great difficulty he had consented to say the *Benedicite*, only yielding because there was no other priest present. All his time went in prayer, in confessing the Brothers, in forming the novices, in teaching the young boarders, and converting the boys who were in confinement. There was no getting him away from these functions. During his free moments, he worked at some writings he was finishing for the sanctification of the Brothers, amongst others a "Method of mental prayer." But even now his trials were not over. They only end for the Saints after death.

The Bishop of Boulogne, who, in 1716, had shown such intense sympathy for Blessed de la Salle, was an ardent Jansenist, defending Quesnel's book, and appealing against the Bull *Unigenitus*. Part of his clergy had gone over with him to the sect, and they hoped to entice the Brothers to join them. In order to influence them, they said that Blessed de la Salle himself inclined to the new doctrines, and that he appealed against the Bull *Unigenitus*. The Brothers wrote to him, which gave him the opportunity of answering them in an admirable letter full of faith and submission to the Church: "I don't think," he said, "that I gave the Dean reason to say I was of the number of those who were appealing.

my dear Brother. I never dreamed of appealing any more than of embracing the new doctrine of the appellants to the future



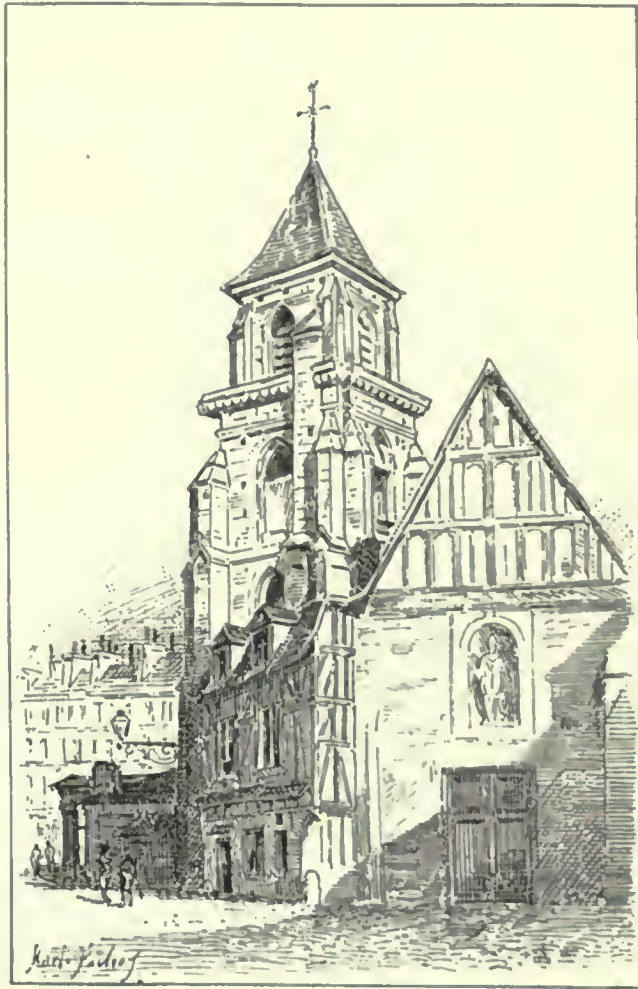
Ed. GARNIER del.

J. CABARTYX sc.

Chapel of Saint Yon. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Cabartaux.
(Cf. another view of Saint Yon, p. 383.)

council. I have too much respect for our Holy Father the Pope, and too much submission for the decision of the Holy See, not to

acquiesce. I wish in this to do like St Jerome, who, in a difficulty created in the Church by the Arians, who wanted him to admit that there were in God three hypostases, thought fit to consult the chair of St Peter on which he knew the Church was built.



Old church of Saint Sever. — Drawn by Fichot Junior.

Addressing himself to Pope Damasus, he said that if His Holiness ordered him to recognize the three hypostases in God, in spite of his own misgiving he would declare there were three hypostases. The Saint concluded his letter by imploring the Pope in the name of Jesus crucified, Saviour of the world, and of the Blessed Trinity of three Divine Persons in one nature, to authorize him to confess

or to deny that there were three hypostases in God. The Dean and others must not, therefore, be surprised if, following the example of this great Saint so enlightened in matters of religion, I find it that he who sits in the chair of Peter has spoken by a Bull which has been accepted by almost all the Bishops of the world, and has condemned the hundred and one propositions



Interior of Saint Sever. — Drawn by Fichot Juuier; engraved by Méaulle.

taken from Father Quesnel's book, and if, after so authentic a decision of the Church, I say with St Augustine that the case is closed. This is my feeling and opinion on the subject, and they have always been the same, and will never change ”.

This letter is dated from Rouen, January 28th 1719, three months before the death of the servant of God, and consequently may be considered the testament of the faith in which he had lived, and in which he wished to die.

The servant of God had also some difficulties with the parish-

priest of Saint Sever, whose parishioner he was, and whose indiscreet zeal had wanted to compel the Brothers, for the edification of his Church, to practices incompatible with their Rule and the good order of the house. An agreement was made between them, but some points of it having been found impracticable, the pastor held Blessed de la Salle responsible, and complained of the matter to his ecclesiastical Superiors, the Archbishop of Rouen and his Vicar general. The Archbishop allowed himself to be influenced, and even went so far as to withdraw from the servant of God the faculties that he had given him for the house of Saint Yon. This affair was a fresh source of anxiety for the holy man; but he bore the trial with his habitual serenity, and nothing could force him to utter an angry word, or show the slightest sign of impatience.

Blessed de la Salle had the presentiment of his death. He was not yet very old, and his infirmities, although painful, were not of that kind which shorten life. He had long been suffering from rheumatism that he had caught in the little house of Vaugirard, where he had spent winters without fire in a cell open to all the winds of heaven, and with damp linen. He had inherited from all this misery pains that had often nailed him to his bed, incapable of moving, every limb tortured as if he were on the rack. An asthma was added to this, and he suffered unceasingly, day and night, but these sufferings, however painful they may be, generally come with age, and are no sign of the nearness of death. The forebodings of the holy man were from another cause, and it was from above that he was warned of his approaching end. Since his return to Saint Yon, he was more and more detached from the world, and thought only of appearing before God. "I beg of you for the love of God", he writes at this period to one of the Brothers who consulted him, "don't address yourself to me, my dear Brother. You have Superiors to whom you should commu-

nicate your affairs, spiritual and temporal. I wish henceforth to think only of death, which is soon going to separate me from all creatures. ”

The same idea recurs in all his conversations. The only care he took was to hide the acute pains that he was suffering, to wear a calm and cheerful countenance, and not to relax any of his exercises or austerities. His abstinence was as rigorous as ever, and his prayers were not abridged. The Lent of 1719 began. Despite the entreaties of those around him, he insisted on observing all its prescriptions. “The victim is going to be immolated,” he would reply, “we must work at its purification.” But his strength was rapidly diminishing. His asthma became so oppressive, that he could hardly breathe. His confessor considered that he was no longer fit to abstain, and forbade him. He obeyed humbly.

Soon after this, an accident occurred and brought on a serious complication, which hastened the final crisis— a door fell on his head, and caused him violent pain. The Doctor considered the case fatal, and did not conceal the truth from him. The servant of God learned the tidings with joy, like a man who at last sees the goal to which he has been journeying. He accepted, nevertheless, all the remedies that were ordered, and which were often more painful than the disease itself. The only thing he refused to do was to stay in bed; he wished death to find him up, like a brave athlete. He dragged himself to all the exercises, until, at last, his strength betrayed his courage, and he could no longer move. His joy was not diminished; it increased with his suffering. “I trust,” he said, “that I shall be soon led out of Egypt, and brought into the true land of promise.”

The feast of St Joseph was drawing near. Blessed de la Salle had always had a great veneration for the glorious Saint under whose protection he had placed the Institute, and who is the patron of those who watch over youth. He had an ardent desire to say mass once more in his honor. This favor, contrary to all expectation, was granted to him. On the 18th of March, towards

evening, his pains grew much less, and his strength returned. The night was calm, and next morning he was able to rise, and go up to the altar, and offer the holy sacrifice in the midst of his Brothers who could hardly believe the evidence of their eyes. All day, he conversed with them, heard their last confidences, gave them parting advice, and then lay down again. He was now evidently much worse.

The parish-priest of Saint Sever was warned of the danger, and hastened to visit him. Seeing, as all did, that there was no hope, and fearing from the great serenity of the dying man that he was under a delusion as to his state, he thought it necessary to tell him the truth without circumlocution. "Know," he said, "that you are going to die, and that you will then appear before God." Blessed de la Salle replied : "I know it, and I am quite resigned to His orders. My fate is in His hands. May His will be done!"

And, in truth, his soul was constantly united to God, and he was waiting with holy impatience for the last links that bound him to this world to be broken. Some days passed thus.

He grew worse, and asked for the Viaticum. They promised to bring it to him the next day, which was Wednesday in Holy Week, and he spent the whole night in preparing himself for this great act. His poor cell was adorned as well as the poverty of the house permitted. He insisted on being lifted out of his bed, clothed in his surplice and stole, and placed sitting upright in a chair. At the sound of the bell that announced the approach of the priest, he fell upon his knees, and received Communion, his face all aglow with that extraordinary devotion that he so often displayed in the celebration of the Divine mysteries. All the spectators were deeply impressed. It was the last rays of a life that was fading away. Next day, Holy Thursday, he received Extreme Unction. His mind was not the least dimmed; on the contrary, it had that peculiar lucidity which God reserves for His Saints at the last hour. He saw into souls, and gave some supreme warnings and advice to the Brothers who were kneeling round his bed. A man of the world, drawing near to consult him about something, received this answer :

“ It only depends on yourself to be saved. God is loading you with His graces, but you don't correspond to them. You don't go to Him as you ought, and you bury the talents that He has entrusted to you ”.

The voice of the holy man was growing weaker and weaker. All his children fell upon their knees, and Brother Bartholomew begged him to give his blessing to all the Brothers of the Institute. He hesitated at first from humility; but then raising his eyes to heaven, and extending his hands, he said : “ May the Lord bless you all! ”

Towards evening, he became unconscious. They said the prayers of the agonizing. When they were ended, he came to himself, and, addressing the Brothers, said : “ If you wish to persevere and die in your vocation, have no intercourse with people in the world. Little by little, you will get a taste for their habits, and get so drawn into conversation with them, that you will no longer be able, out of politeness, to refrain from applauding their discourse, however pernicious it may be, which will lead you to fall away into unfaithfulness. Being no longer faithful in observing your Rule, you will grow disgusted with your vocation, and will abandon it ”.

A cold sweat interrupted him here, and the agony began. It lasted from midnight till two in the morning. It being the night of Good Friday, Blessed de la Salle was associated with the sufferings of the Passion. Towards morning, consciousness partly returned. They told him to invoke the assistance of the Blessed Virgin, his constant protectress, and he recited the prayer he was in the habit of saying every night— *Maria, Mater gratiæ*. The Brother Superior asked him if he accepted his sufferings with joy. “ Yes, ” he replied, “ I adore in all things the designs of God upon me. ”

These were his last words.

At three o'clock in the morning, the agony began again, and lasted an hour. The body was agitated, but the face was tranquil. Towards four o'clock, he joined his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, made an effort to raise himself as if to go to meet some

one, and expired. He had gone to celebrate the Paschal feast in heaven. It was the 7th of April 1719. Blessed de la Salle was sixty-eight years of age.

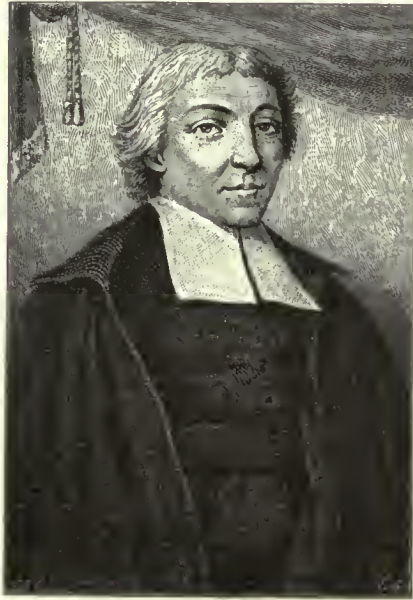


Portrait of Blessed de la Salle on his death bed, from a drawing of Du P'hy (see p. 437).
— Engraved by Joffroy.

When the news of his death was spread through the town of Rouen, a great concourse of people flocked to the house to see him for the last time. Every one looked upon him as a Saint, and wanted to gaze once more upon his countenance, and carry away some souvenir of him. A crucifix, a New Testament, an Imitation

of Christ, made up the sum of his wealth, so his clothes had to be cut up to content the pious avidity of the people.

The venerable body remained exposed in the chapel of Saint Yon, clothed in his sacerdotal vestments, from Friday evening to Saturday afternoon. The face had lost none of its beauty and serenity. Death had only thrown over his features a thin veil through which shone the splendors of eternal life. On Holy Saturday, he was



Portrait of Blessed de la Salle, from a most valuable miniature belonging to M. Édouard Pelay, of Rouen.
— Drawn by Édouard Gardier; engraved by Chapon.

buried, very quietly because of the Paschal feast. The body was borne by six Brothers, and followed by all the others chaunting psalms; tears were streaming from their eyes, and sobs mingling with their prayers. They had lost their father and benefactor, and were truly orphans. Ecclesiastics, Religious of all orders came to attend the funeral.

The service was celebrated on Quasimodo Monday by the priests of the little seminary of Saint Nicaise, and a great number of notabilities came to pay the last honors to a man who had fled from honors all his life.

The body was laid to rest in the chapel of Saint Susanne in

the church of Saint Sever. On his tomb was engraved an inscription now effaced and replaced by the following one in Latin :—
“ Here awaits the resurrection venerable John Baptist de la Salle, of Rheims, Priest, Doctor in theology, Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Rheims, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian schools. He died on Good Friday, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, the 7th of April 1719, in the house of the Brothers of Saint Yon, in this parish. May God grant that he find rest! ”

Several parish-priests celebrated solemn masses, and Brother Bartholomew received a great number of letters expressing the deep affliction which this death had caused throughout France.

✓ Blessed de la Salle was rather above the middle height, and well proportioned. His constitution, delicate in childhood, had grown strong from exercise and work, until penances and excessive fatigue weakened his health. His forehead was broad, his nose straight, his eyes large and of a blueish grey, his skin was tanned by exposure and travelling, his hair, which curled, and which had been chestnut in his youth, was grey and white in his declining years. His countenance bore the stamp of great sweetness and majesty. His air was modest and serene; his manners simple and gracious. An atmosphere of holiness breathed from his whole person. We are here only reproducing the incomparable portrait of his body traced by his first historian, than which nothing could be more truthful and accurate in every line. Let us now reproduce that of his soul, drawn by the same master-hand :— “ Nobody ”, says Canon Blain, “ had more the air of a Saint. Grace, enthroned, as it were, on his countenance, seemed to show forth to men what he was before God, and depict there the beauties of his soul. You were drawn towards God in looking at him. Everything in him breathed the perfume of the virtues of humility, modesty, sweetness, charity, tranquillity, equality of mind, mortification and

deep piety. Always the same under all circumstances of sorrow and trouble, in so many painful and vexatious events, and when suffering from such anxiety and inward care, he was like unto a man, whose heart, fixed on heaven, takes no interest in what is passing here below; he was like a man who strove to regulate all his thoughts and desires according to God's glory, and solely in view of the Divine pleasure.

His life is the Gospel put in practice. To do penance, to deny oneself, to mortify and crucify the flesh, to pray, to converse with God, to appear amongst men only to labor for their salvation or to

*Nous soussigné Docteur en Théologie Supérieur de
l'une des Ecoles Chrétiennes Envoyons notrre cher frère Joseph
dans les maisons de quise Laon Reims et Reims et Troyes
pour y faire la visite en voy de quoy nous avons signé ces
présentes. fait a Paris ce treizieme Juillet mil sept cent neuf*
De la Salle

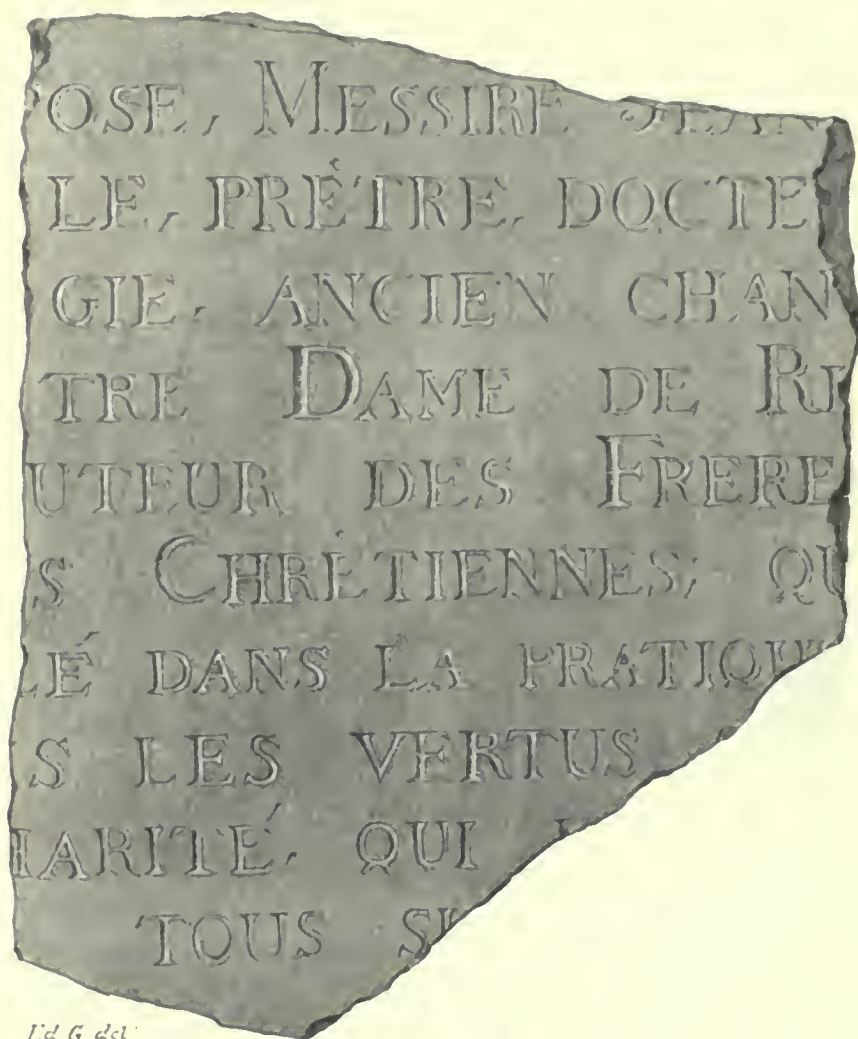


Fac-simile of Blessed de la Salle's writing, from a document preserved in the Archives of the Institute.

— Cf. the first formula of vows, p. 240.

receive their contempt, to devote oneself wholly to the poorest and most abandoned, to suffer everything, to give way to everyone, never to complain, never to feel offended, always to see oneself in the wrong, to bless God, to take His will in all things for the rule of our own will, to love our friends in Him and our enemies for Him, only to see and desire God in all things, to be interested only in His glory, to forget everything else, to have no aversion towards anything but the world, to hate nothing but sin, to fear nothing but to displease the sovereign majesty, to desire only to imitate Jesus Christ, to be attracted only by the cross, and to love God alone, is not this the epitome of the Gospel and of Blessed de la Salle's life?

What examples of self-forgetfulness, of severity for the body, of contempt for the world, of thirst for justice, of purity of heart, of a holy passion for humiliation and suffering, of detachment from



Fragment of the inscription placed on the second tomb of Blessed de la Salle. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier.

all earthly things, of love of prayer, of union with God and sacrifice of self, does not the history of this saintly priest offer to us? What graces are hidden in his interior life, and what merits accumulated in that life of crucified suffering, will be manifested on that day when the secrets of hearts shall be revealed.

The servant of God was like a man dead to everything; a man in whom nature no more dared to show itself, nor put forward the least claim; a man whose life was wholly supernatural, celestial, divine; who thought, spoke and acted as if he had been of a higher nature; a man whose natural element had become virtue, whose life was God, whose soul and centre were Jesus Christ.



Present tomb of Blessed de la Salle at the boarding-school of the Brothers, at Rouen. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier.

In prayer, he looked like an angel; at the altar, like a seraph; in his conduct he was truly an apostolic man; in tribulation, he was another Job; in poverty, a Tobias; in abandonment to Providence, a Francis of Assisi; in the rigors of penance, a second Abbé de Rancé; in the practice of obedience, a new Dositheus; in the exercises of every virtue, a perfect disciple of Jesus Christ. This is Venerable de la Salle as he really was; this is his true portrait."

Until 1734 the body of Blessed de la Salle¹ remained in the church of Saint Sever, where it had been laid the day after his death. The Brothers, having added a church to their house at Saint Yon, asked to have the remains of their founder restored to them. The Archbishop consented, and the body was exhumed on the 16th of July 1734.



Chalice and cruets of Blessed de la Salle, preserved in the treasure of the Cathedral of Rheims.

The tomb was opened, and the bones were found intact in their natural position. They were covered with a white cloth, placed in a leaden coffin, and then in a wooden chest that was sealed. An immense crowd assisted at this touching ceremony. The coffin was placed in a vault behind the altar of the choir.

In 1793, the revolutionary mob broke open the tomb and stole the lead; but they left the body almost intact.

¹ The Brothers in Paris possess precious relics of Blessed de la Salle : his cloak, his stole, a chasuble, a cloak for state occasions, a soutane, two square caps, two collars, a cross to be worn on the breast, belts of iron and copper, disciplines of cord, part of his hair shirt, the ensigns of his dignity and his instruments of penance; all these things testify to that sanctity which the Church has proclaimed.





When the cause of the canonization was begun, the remains of Blessed de la Salle were exhumed in the presence of a secretary of the Archbishopric, a physician, a representative of the civil authority, several ecclesiastical and lay witnesses, and some Brothers, amongst whom were Brother Calixtus, Director of the Normal school, and Brother Peloguin, Director of the schools at Rouen. These two were, later on, assistants of the Superior general.

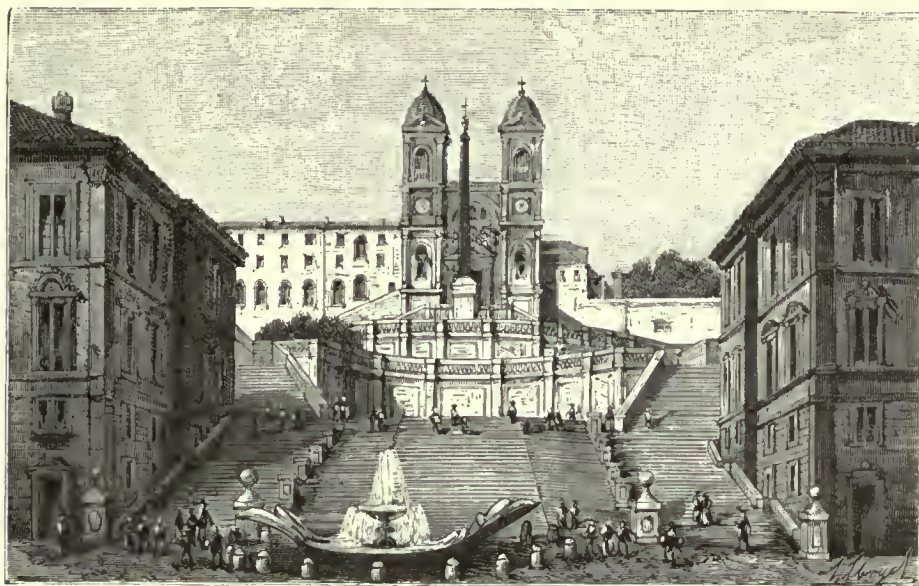
All the witnesses signed the account of the exhumation certifying that the bones were almost all there, and that no doubt could exist as to their identity. They were consigned to a vault made behind the altar in the chapel of the Brothers' house, in the interior of Rouen, on the site of the old church of Saint Lô. Finally, they were removed in 1881 to the chapel of the boarding-school established in the town, where they will remain until the Church permits worship to be paid to them, and thus glorifies in this world so many exalted virtues.

We have endeavored to show forth the fecundity and the splendor of those virtues, and we venture to hope that we have succeeded; for the merits of the Saints are the most precious inheritance of nations, and Blessed de la Salle is at once an honor to the Church, and one of the purest glories of France.



BOOK THE THIRD

AFTER BLESSED DE LA SALLE



Rome : the Piazza di Spagna and the Trinità-dei-Monti, near which is established (since 1702) the house of the Christian Brothers. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST SUCCESSORS OF BLESSED DE LA SALLE.

— BROTHER BARTHOLOMEW (1717-1720),
AND BROTHER TIMOTHY (1720-1751).



s the work of the Saints is sketched out for them by precursors whose action Providence has guided through the ages, so is that same work continued after them by successors who are also guided by God. The Saints survive their own lives.

Every Saint's life might be divided into three parts : the Saint before his birth ; the Saint during his life ; the Saint after his death.

Here again, Jesus Christ is the supreme type, imitable and imitated.

The Incarnate Word was prepared during forty centuries ; His work and its influence will be continued to the end of time.

These truths seem to apply with special evidence to Blessed de la Salle. We have seen what glorious predecessors he had in this undertaking of the Christian schools, which he carried providentially to such successful issues; we have assisted at the struggles which filled, while they glorified, his life; but it still remains for us to study his posthumous influence on the work that he created, its earthly radiation since his death, and, so to speak, its prolongation in history.

This will be the subject of this third and last part of a book written in all sincerity, to the glory of God and to the praise of that holy founder, who, like Jesus, loved to "let little children come unto him."

It was no slight responsibility to take charge of the Institute as successor to Blessed de la Salle; but we have seen that during his life time, from motives of humility as well as of prudence, he had confided to one of his disciples the government of the congregation. This measure was a wise one in every respect; it enabled him to judge of the organization of his foundation and of the working of its different branches. Let us add that the new Superior, chosen from among the Brothers, was worthy of the responsibility laid upon him; Brother Bartholomew was the living counterpart of the blessed founder, who, on learning his election, exclaimed— "God be blessed! nothing will be changed."

It may truly be said that, with the exception of its founder, no one was more thoroughly acquainted with the Institute than Brother Bartholomew, who, when appointed to fill the post he would gladly have declined, had just visited the twenty houses belonging to the newly founded congregation. He possessed, in addition to a rare knowledge of men— that gift of all others— great personal holiness. When the Brothers were about to elect their new Superior, Blessed de la Salle, wishing to point out to them in one word the wisest course to follow, said to them : "Elect the one among you who is the holiest or who wishes most to become so," and he doubtless then had Brother Bartholomew in his thoughts. The beautiful life of the new Superior general has hitherto

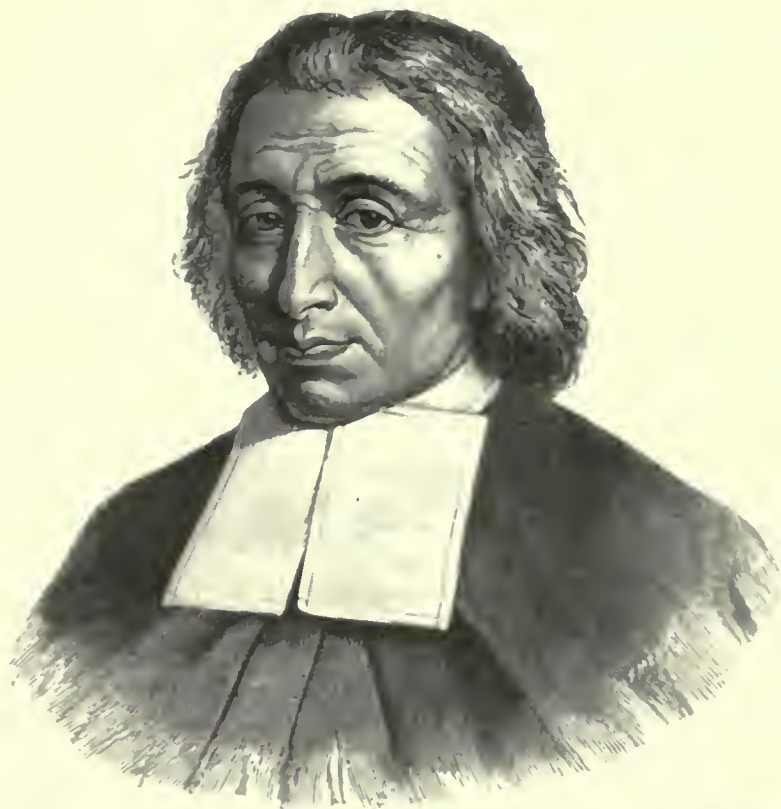
remained comparatively unnoticed, thrown into the shade by the greater renown of his founder; he nevertheless deserves the careful attention of historians. The characteristic feature of his singularly attractive nature was an inexhaustible fund of kindness and gentleness. If some of his successors had more striking qualities, none possessed a more loving heart. The weight of government oppressed him greatly, and the thought of the responsibilities and charges that were laid upon his shoulders gave to his character a tinge of sadness— “ I am at once sad and joyous, but I am comforted by the fragrance that breathes forth from the life of our Blessed Father. ” The holy founder was ever present to his thoughts, and his one endeavour was to imitate him in all his actions; it was he who, as a surprise to his Brethren, caused the portrait of the servant of God to be painted as he lay on his death bed¹, and who, foreseeing that he would be raised to the altars of the Church, ordered the members of the congregation who had known him to collect all the documents that might help to complete a life which would one day be held up to the admiration of the Christian world.

It often happens that souls in whom great gentleness appears to be the chief virtue are wanting in firmness; but such was not the case with Brother Bartholomew, who to the meekness of a lamb could, when required, unite the courage of a lion. The Jansenists spared no pains to surround him and to gain him to their party, at the time when the struggle was at its height, between truth and error; but their efforts were vain; with unswerving fidelity he maintained that his Institute was and should ever be strictly “ Roman, ” and neither the reproofs of certain bishops and priests, unfortunately misled by error, nor the open attacks directed by others against his Communities, could shake his loyalty to the Holy See. “ I bless God, ” he used to say, “ that He has given me such strong aversion for novelties. ” These last words exasperated the Jansenists, but they soon became convinced that

¹ See this portrait by Du Phly, p. 424.

their efforts were vain, and Brother Bartholomew will ever, in the history of his Institute, have the glory of having preserved it from the most insidious and dangerous of all heresies¹.

“ I so love peace! I so love union! ” Blessed de la Salle’s successor frequently repeated these words, and sought on all



Brother Bartholomew, first Superior general, born at Sains, diocese of Cambrai, February 11th 1674, entered the Institute February 10th 1703, elected Superior general May 23rd 1717, died at Saint Yan June 8th 1730.
— Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Moullieron.

occasions to put them into practice in his government of the congregation. It was under his rule that a new house was founded at Saint Omer, adding, as it were, another flower to a crown already so richly adorned. He continually recalled to the minds of his sons the teaching of their founder, striving above all to penetrate them with his spirit; this was his only system of

¹ Brother Bartholomew was a good and sound theologian, and he composed for his Brethren a treatise on the matters that were then so ardently discussed.

government. His zeal for teaching Christian doctrine, the object of the Institute, was so great that he would often stop the passers-by on the high roads and by-ways, and speak to them familiarly of the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

His humility was no less striking than his modesty. Not only did he scrupulously ask the advice of the two Assistants, appointed to help him in the cares of government, but he treated the very novices with deference, and would gladly have obeyed them. Towards the end of his life, his deep humility became still more apparent; he often knelt down before his Brothers and kissed their feet; his mind and heart seemed more and more fixed on the beloved memory of his holy Father— “ Let us imitate our Father,” he often repeated; and on his death bed, he exclaimed with a radiant look of happiness : “ I see our Lady and our venerable Father who are coming to meet me.” Thus passed away the most humble, kindly, gentle Brother Bartholomew, first successor of Blessed de la Salle, on the 8th of June 1720.

The spirit of the founder of the Institute had so far been maintained in all its purity, and his first successor, to whom this important result was due, had worthily fulfilled his task. A more arduous mission was that of Brother Timothy, elected as Superior general, the 7th of August 1720, and to whom Providence entrusted the task of obtaining for his congregation its official recognition by the Pope and the King.

It would be too long and wearisome to relate in their minutest details the various negotiations undertaken by the Brothers to attain so important an object; it is sufficient to say that on July the 2nd 1725, a day memorable in the history of the new Congregation, the Chamber of Finance ordered that the letters patent of Louis XV., issued the previous month of September, in favor of the Institute, should be officially registered. By these

letters, the King authorized the Brothers to live in the house of Saint Yon; he further gave them full liberty— “ to train subjects to teach in their charity-schools in the different towns of the kingdom; moreover, to open schools, where they should teach the principles of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman faith



Louis XV., who signed in 1724 the first letters in favor of the Institute.
— Engraved by Méanle, from a portrait of the time.

to the poor children of the said town, and of the suburbs and neighborhood of Rouen. They shall also teach reading, writing and arithmetic, the whole gratuitously¹. ” Nothing can be clearer than these words, so fruitful in precious results. But the Pope’s Bull is a still more glorious testimony². Kings,

¹ The King, moreover, permitted the Brothers to accept legacies and donations, and to receive in their houses boarders willing to come to them. = ² See portrait of Benedict XIII. p. 453.



LE PAPE BENOÎT XIII

APPROUVA LES RÈGLES DE L'INSTITUT DES FF. DES ÉCOLES CHRÉT.
le 26 Janvier de l'an 1726

Peint par P.L. Cheszins

Gravé par Manigaud



however powerful they may be, address but one nation; the Sovereign Pontiff is universal and addresses the whole world.

We can hardly picture to ourselves in these degenerate days the effect produced by the voice of the Vicar of Christ, when, borne on the winds of heaven, it reverberated throughout Christendom, uttering these words : “ We approve and confirm, by our Apostolic authority, the Institute and the Rule of the Brothers of the Christian schools¹. ”

Placed under the direction of a Superior general elected for life, the Brothers “ make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, of stability in the Institute, and to teach the poor gratuitously. ” General Chapters held at least every ten years, treat of the concerns of the congregation, while visitors, chosen by the Superior general, inspect the different houses every year. The Brothers may not aspire to holy Orders, and their costume consists in a common garment of strict simplicity. The whole life of the Institute is summed up in these few lines.

¹ Here is the text of the Bull, of which we give further on the fac-simile :

Nos igitur, qui spiritualem animarum profectum ac Christifidelium quorumlibet utilitates et commoda sinceris desideramus affectibus, Superiorem generalem et Fratres præfatos et quemlibet eorum specialibus favoribus et gratiis prosequi volentes, et a quibusvis excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti, aliisque ecclesiasticis sententiis, censuris et pœnis, si quibus quomodolibet innodati existunt, ad effectum præsentium tantum consequendum, harum serie absolventes et absolutos fore censentes, hujusmodi supplicationibus inclinati, et ex voto Congregationis venerabilium fratrum nostrorum sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ Cardinalium decretorum concilii Tridentini interpretum, sine alicujus præjudicio, Institutum et regulas hujusmodi, et in eis contenta quæcumque, licita tamen et honesta ac sacris canonibus et constitutionibus apostolicis ac concilii Tridentini præfati decretis non adversantia, apostolica auctoritate approbamus et confirmamus, eisque apostolicæ firmitatis robur adjicimus.

We, therefore, desiring with sincere affection the spiritual advancement of souls and whatever is useful and profitable for the Faithful of Christ, and wishing to bestow special graces and favors upon the aforesaid Brothers and their Superior general, collectively and individually, do by these presents absolve them, and wish them to be held absolved, from every sentence of excommunication, suspension and interdict, and from all other Ecclesiastical judgments, censures and penalties, if at all they labor under any; and looking favorably upon this petition, and having thereto the consent of our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the decrees of the Council of Trent, We, by virtue of Our Apostolical authority, with prejudice to none, do approve and confirm the said Institute and the said Rules, with all their contents, thereby imparting to them the force of Our Apostolical stability, provided they be in accord with law and decorum, and not contrary to the holy Canons, the Apostolical Constitutions, and the decrees of the Council of Trent.

This Bull—*In Apostolicæ dignitatis solio*, of January 26th 1725,

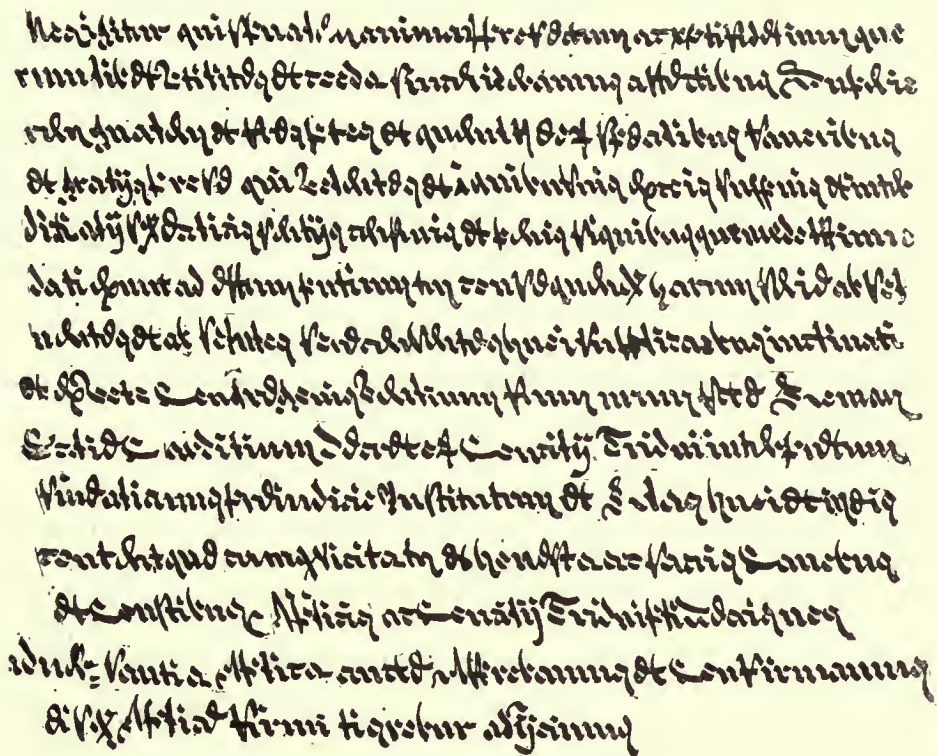


Bull *In apostolicæ dignitatis solio*. — First line, frame and seal. — From the original preserved in the Archives of the Institute. — Drawn by Seller.

is for the Brothers a patent of nobility of which they may feel justly proud. Why is it not read by those enemies of the

Church who accuse us of having always hated the light and loved darkness? Why do they not, at least, read that magnificent protestation against “the countless disorders engendered by *ignorance, source of all evil?*”

But Brother Timothy had only communicated to a chosen few amongst the Brothers the steps that had been taken in Rome to



Bull *In apostolica dignitate solio*. — Fac-simile of which the text and translation have been given above (p. 441.)
From the original preserved in the Archives of the Institute ¹.

obtain the Bull; there was, consequently, a general shout of surprise and thanksgiving when it became known that the Institute was henceforth included amongst the religious Congregations, properly so called. Providence had realized in a manner that seemed to them almost miraculous the ardent desire of their holy founder to

¹ The writing of this document is extremely difficult to read. “It is that famous *littera sancti Petri*, or *Bullaticum leutonicum* which necessitated a copy, or *transcriptum*, being sent with the Bull. This habit was set aside by a *motu proprio* of Pope Leo XIII., dated, December 29th 1878.” (*History of the sources of canon law*, by Adolphe Tardif, p. 83.)

obtain the approbation of the Holy See for the Institute and the Rule. Well might Brother Bartholomew in the joy of his heart exclaim : " M. de la Salle has been taken from us ; but he is not lost to us, he can help us greatly in heaven ¹. "

The Brothers had an opportunity of manifesting their joy at the close of the general Chapter, when the election of Brother Timothy was confirmed on the feast of the Assumption 1725. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the chapel of Saint Yon. The representative of the Archbishop, clothed in the sacerdotal vestments, went up to the altar, and, turning to the Brothers, read to them, in a voice trembling with emotion, the Bull of Benedict XIII. All were in tears, and with the Divine Host unconsumed in their breast, they knelt on the steps of the altar, and pronounced the formula of vows as the Pope had prescribed it ².

Supported on one hand by the monarchy, and on the other by the Sovereign Pontiff, the Institute of Blessed de la Salle was henceforth secure against all future dangers or alarms. But it is not sufficient that a religious Order should obtain the right to live, it must moreover prove itself worthy of this right, and such was the case with the sons of M. de la Salle.

Already, in 1722, during the terrible pestilence of Marseilles, which the heroism of M^{gr} de Belzunce has made famous, the Brothers valiantly remained at their post, where several among them found a glorious death.

" The Capuchins had lost forty-two religious; the Recollets, twenty-nine; and the Dominicans, twenty-one." It was an honour for the Congregation of M. de la Salle that some of his sons were permitted to join these martyrs to patriotism and charity ³, and their generous sacrifice was likely to draw down a blessing upon the new foundation ⁴.

¹ *Annals of the Institute*, p. 457. = ² *Ibid.*, pp. 460, 461. = ³ *Ibid.*, p. 428. =

⁴ To the Brothers who died victims of charity at Marseilles, we must add Brother Fleury : " Who, on the 13th of October 1721, then teaching school at Mende, died while serving the sick of that town and was buried in the cemetery of Saint Gervasius and Protasius. " On the 28th September of the following year, Brother Nicolas died in the same town, under similar circumstances. (Archives of Mende.)



Dr. G. A. V. 1824. 1824

TRICHON, 50



As often happens in the case of new religious Orders, the Congregation experienced, at the beginning of the government of Brother Timothy, a moment of arrest in its development; the number of masters was insufficient and there were few vocations. Soon, however, it seemed to acquire new life, and in 1728, having repaired the forces of his little army, the Superior general resumed



Brother Timothy, second Superior general, born in Paris, parish of Saint Severin, on the 14th of January 1682; entered the Institute the 24th January 1700, elected Superior general the 7th of August 1720, resigns his post as Superior the 3rd of August 1751; died at Saint Yon the 7th January 1752.
Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Mouilleron.

his struggle against ignorance. In the space of three years, from 1728 to 1731, ten new schools were opened in Picardy, Normandy, le Perche and Dauphiny. The twenty years that followed were no less fruitful, and between 1732 and 1751, sixty-two foundations were made in different parts of France.

On every side Bishops begged the Superior general to send them Brothers. M^{gr} de Bussy, Bishop of Meaux, was one of the first,

in 1720, to invite the Brothers to his diocese, where their method, "as excellent in itself as it was special to them," produced such good results that, the following year, the Bishop undertook to defray, at his own expense, the cost of twelve Brothers, instead of the five who had come to him originally.

Several Bishops followed in his footsteps, and sought to give their flock the benefit of a Christian education. At Valence, Mgr Milon, filled with sorrow at the sight of "the misconduct, idleness and ignorance of the poor children of the town," proposed to replace the lay teachers by the Christian Brothers. The municipal Councillors hesitated at first on account of the increase of expense for the town, but the Bishop clearly showed them that, far from being an extra charge for the inhabitants of the city, the new masters would, on the contrary, not require the salary demanded by the lay teachers. He himself undertook all the first expenses of their arrival and lodging; the Intendant of the province gave his consent, and the school of Valence soon became very flourishing.

However different they might be in the manner of their foundation, the new schools were all the result of a common inspiration of charity. Sometimes it happened, as at Mézières, that a devout lady gave up her fortune to this pious enterprise, or else, as at Carcassonne, that a Bishop, Mgr de Bezons, out of his own private means founded a school for "poor boys," only asking in return that they should every day repeat a short prayer for his soul.

Unfortunately, the new Institute had not only to struggle against financial difficulties, it had moreover to hold its own against the false philosophy of the eighteenth century, which, by the mouth-piece of Voltaire and La Chalotais had succeeded in rousing popular prejudice against what they termed—"the dangers of popular education."

The success of the Brothers at Marseilles and Avignon inspired Maurice de Montfort and Pierre de Batel, two inhabitants of Arles, with a great wish to ensure to the children of their native city the advantages of a similar education. Their project met

however with violent opposition on the part of a magistrate of Arles, named Lincel. "The proposed foundation," said he, "might be very profitable if it were simply established to give religious instruction, but if once the Brothers begin to teach reading and writing gratuitously, all the inhabitants will send their children to them; and these children, instead of being accustomed to hard work from their tender years, will grow up unfit for it." His colleagues were happily not convinced by this strange argument, and in 1740 the town accepted the school. The crowd of pupils was so great, that a larger building had to be found, and M^r de Bellefond established the Brothers in the old Abbey of Saint Clare, that belonged to the Sec of Arles.

At Privas, where in 1744 the Vicar general of Viviers had invited the Brothers to open a school, some opposition was made by the first Consul of the town, and it needed the intervention of the Intendant of the province to smooth down all difficulties.

At Nantes, a different pretext was brought forward to prevent the establishment of the Christian schools. The town council, while recognizing their advantages and the satisfaction "given to the public by the labors of the Brothers," complained that their arrival would be the ruin of the school-masters, and for this reason refused to defray the expenses of a new foundation. However, the King interfered in favor of the Congregation, and obliged the town Council to pay three hundred francs a year to the Christian Brothers.

It was not the first time that Louis the Fifteenth had openly shown his interest in the Institute; he had already exempted it from the payment of certain taxes, but the farmers refused to recognize this privilege, and endeavored to oblige the Brothers to pay and to have soldiers billeted on them, a burden from which they had also been exempted by the King. The scanty revenues of the Institute did not suffice to meet these heavy demands, and Brother Timothy spared no pains to vindicate the privileges of his Congregation. An address, drawn up by a Paris lawyer, Boignet de Chanterenne, was presented, in 1745, to the Assembly

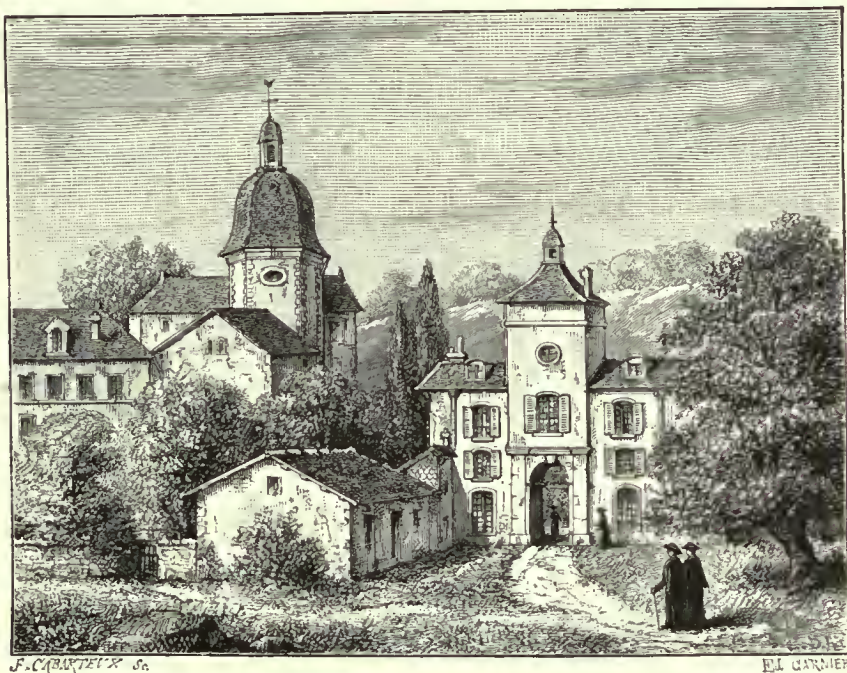
of the Clergy. Many Bishops had had the opportunity of appreciating the services rendered by the Brothers to the cause of Christian education; their petition was therefore favorably received, and the Assembly undertook to put an end to the unjust demands of the farmers.

The beneficial influence of the institute did not however confine itself to the foundation of elementary schools, and it is at this period that we first witness the establishment of those professional schools, so much the fashion in our days, and in which the Brothers have always been so successful. For instance, a superior school, founded for the express object of teaching all that is connected with trade, was established at Boulogne in 1744.

In 1750, another work of a totally different character, but no less original and fruitful, was started by the Brothers. A popular free library was founded at Montauban.

During this time, elementary schools were being founded beyond the frontier, in the Duchy of Ferrara and in Lorraine, where Stanislas Leckzinski caused four to be established, one of which, at Maréville, was destined to receive youthful convicts and was organized on the model of Saint Yon. The house of Saint Yon, the real cradle of the Institute, absorbed a great portion of the time and care of the Superior general. He resolved to rebuild the Chapel, the former one being wholly inadequate to the necessities of the Community; the plan was drawn up and executed by the Brothers themselves, assisted by some of their reformatory boys. The two first stones were laid in 1728, by the Archbishop and by the First President of the Parliament of Rouen; but it was not before 1734, that the body of the blessed founder, which till then had rested at Saint Sever, was solemnly transferred to the new chapel. "The memory of the Servant of God seemed suddenly to revive in the hearts of all. The whole population of Rouen came out to meet the procession, which passed between two compact and respectful ranks of spectators. 'A Saint! a Saint!' was the cry that burst forth on every side. The Brothers had taken possession of the pieces of the first coffin, where the body

had rested, and these relics were eagerly sought for. Sixteen priests then raised on their shoulders the new coffin, which contained the remains of one who was already honored as a great servant of God. The Brothers, holding lighted tapers, went to meet the precious relics of their father, and had the joy of hearing the priest who had assisted him in his last moments loudly exalt his charity, his zeal, his humility, those fruitful sources



Maréville (p. 448). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, from a print of the eighteenth century; engraved by Cabartaux.

of all Christian virtues, which, by raising him above all things visible and fragile, made him live only to adore God, think only to pray to Him, speak only to praise Him, work and suffer only to possess Him¹. ”

The happiness of sons who heard praises such as these of their father may easily be imagined !

The examples left by the holy founder brought forth rich fruit in the souls of his disciples, but, in order to appreciate fully the

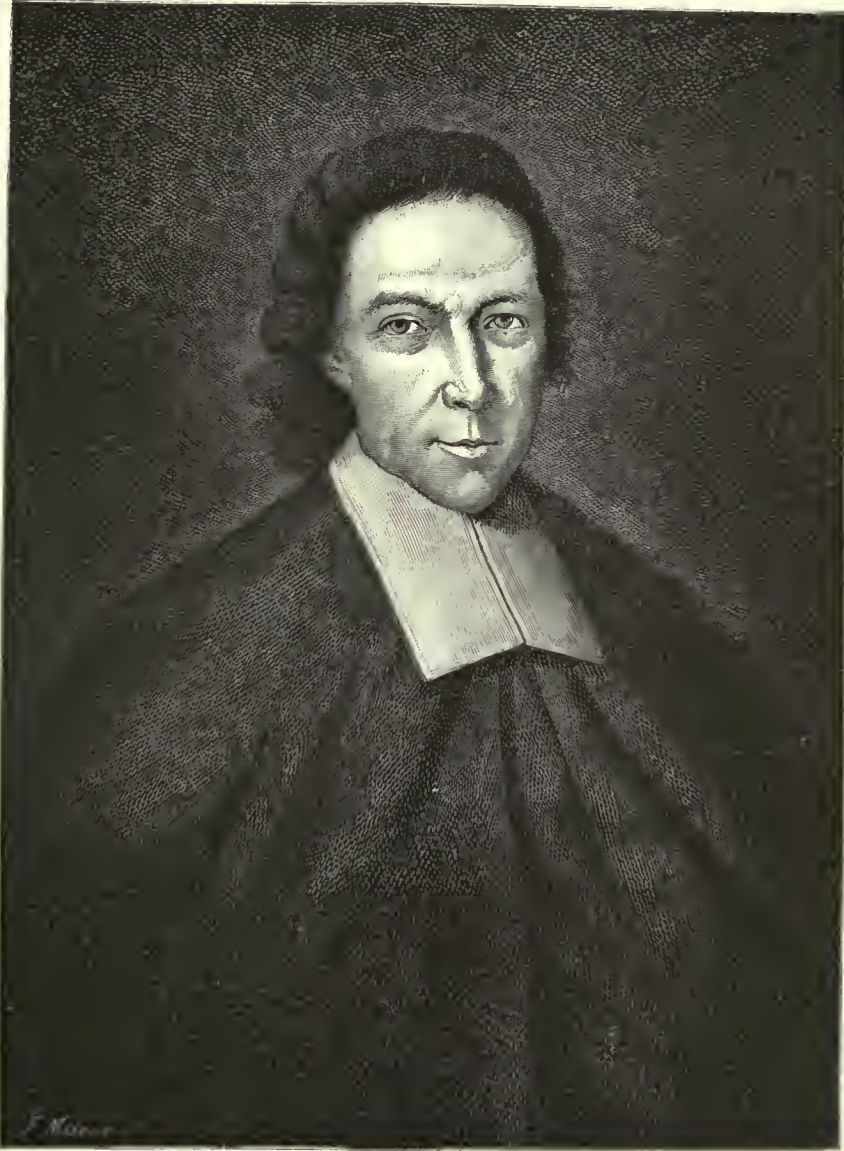
¹ *Annals of the Institute*, vol. II, pp. 56-64.

hidden holiness of their lives, we should have to raise the veil of their humility, penetrate into their cells, and follow them through the daily routine of a life of toil.

Among other touching instances, let us quote as an example the history of Brother Ireneus, known in the world as Dulac de Montisambert, a brilliant officer of the regiment of Champagne, who, having been grievously wounded at Malplaquet, was converted by reading the Lives of the Saints and resolved to consecrate himself to God. He presented himself to M. de la Salle, and was admitted into the Congregation under the name of Brother Ireneus; but, fearing the regrets and reproaches of his parents, and fearful also of his own weakness, he carefully concealed the place of his retreat. His poor mother sought for him far and wide, till one day, remembering that he had neglected to pay certain debts he had made during his worldly career, Ireneus wrote to his father on the subject, and thus betrayed himself. His mother then wrote to him a letter truly worthy of a Saint:—“At last, my dear child, I have found you again, and for this I shall bless God all my life. May God strengthen you in the way of salvation. I am waiting for news of you, and I entreat of you, by the love I have always borne you, by all the tears you have made me shed, and that I am still shedding as I write, to give me tidings of yourself. If, however, you absolutely refuse to give us news of you, or to receive news of us, I will leave you in peace, though it would be a great consolation for me to converse with you sometimes.” The consolation she so well deserved was given to this admirable mother, and she had the joy of seeing her son again.

Brother Ireneus was for many years the Director of the novices, whom he trained with rare wisdom, prudence and gentleness; he used to say that the novice master should be “the instrument of the Father of mercies to imprison those little wild birds and tie their feet with the salutary net of religious vows;” a comparison recalling those of St Francis of Sales and worthy of him. In 1747, Brother Ireneus died after a painful illness, during which he edified his Brothers by his patience and courage. An act of

heroism is related of this holy soul, which strikingly recalls a similar act performed by St Elizabeth of Hungary, and allud-



Brother Ireneus (p. 450), from a portrait of the time; engraved by Méaulle.

ed to by Père Lacordaire in one of his finest Conferences at Notre Dame. One day, while visiting a hospital, Brother Ireneus met a former officer, whose face was covered with a hideous cancer. He immediately took him in his arms and lovingly pressed

his lips to the frightful wound! On reading this touching incident, does not the exclamation — Brother Ireneus, pray for us, come naturally to the lips?

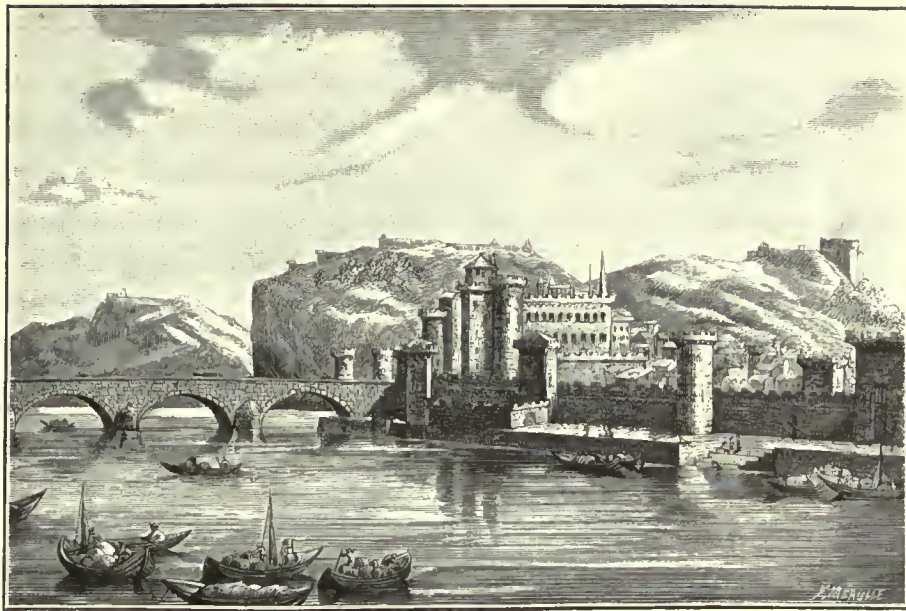
Thus, one by one, the Brothers who had personally known Blessed de la Salle went to reap their reward. Brother Timothy himself, feeling that his strength was failing, begged to be relieved of his responsibility as Superior of the Institute. The Chapter assembled in 1751 accepted his resignation, and gave him as successor Brother Claude, formerly novice master at Avignon. A few months later, on the 7th of January 1752, Brother Timothy closed his holy and laborious career by a peaceful death.

We have now come to a point where, stopping in our course, we can look back upon the road along which we have travelled. The time seems far distant when the Institute, possessing only thirty-one houses, had neither the support of the civil power, nor the official approbation of the Church. A few years after the death of Brother Timothy, one of the enemies of the Order might with truth have exclaimed:— “ The progress of the Brothers is alarming! ” This exclamation, we can heartily echo, changing only the epithet— their progress is not alarming; but it is truly wonderful. In less than half a century, the sons of Blessed de la Salle have accomplished two great things, well worthy of praise:— “ They have, on the one hand, preserved in its integrity the spirit of their founder, and on the other, they have created all the types of popular education. ” The elementary schools, as we have already said, and as we cannot too often repeat, are not their only work, and with that breadth of view, of which their founder left them the example, they have opened boarding-schools as at Maréville, circulating school-libraries as at Montauban, commercial schools as at Boulogne. They anticipated the progressive ideas of the nineteenth century in all that was best and most Christian.

They were the first to inaugurate that scientific and professional education which, when it is based on religion, may easily yield such good results. This is a portion of what they have done, these incomparable men, toiling incessantly in the service of childhood and of youth, working quietly, unostentatiously, worthy imitators of that father who, for their glory and happiness, the Church now raises to her highest honors, and bids all the world worship amongst the Saints of God.

The Archbishop of Sens spoke only the simple truth when he said in 1745:— “ The Institute founded by M. de la Salle is a holy congregation, which does good wherever it spreads. ” We can say no better; this sums up all that can be said.





Avignon, chief town of the southern province of the Institute in the eighteenth century. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

— BROTHER CLAUDE (1751-1767), BROTHER FLORENCE (1767-1777).



WHEN the historian wishes to describe an epoch or an institution with the impartiality which is his first and most sacred duty, he must not content himself with relating facts; he must trace them to their causes, and penetrate their real significance. If we were to relate the annals of the Institute of the Brothers by merely recording facts and details, nothing would be more mon-

otonous and less instructive than such a narrative.

When Brother Claude took up the government of the Institute,

it became necessary for him to consider what enemies he had to struggle against, and what was the general spirit of the nation in the midst of which he was generously preparing himself to serve the good cause.

We are in the year 1751; the second half of that terrible eighteenth century had begun. The poorer classes are still Christian and resigned; the middle classes are already affected, but not deeply; the only classes really tainted are those called the governing ones : the nobility, the court, the financiers; but these are seriously contaminated, and it is from them that all the evil is about to come. For short-sighted historians, the Revolution began on the 14th of July 1789; but for those who are clear-sighted, it was already far advanced in 1751; this was the period of what has been aptly termed " the spirit of the Revolution before the Revolution. "

The Brothers had undoubtedly still against them the Protestants and the Jansenists. The Calvinists rose to the attack at Mens, near Grenoble, in 1754, and the Jansenists sent forth a cry of joy at Rouen, when they succeeded, in 1756, in extorting from the monarchy an enquiry into the house of Saint Yon. But how is it possible not to see that these were the expiring efforts of enemies that were already vanquished?

Jansenism and Protestantism were dead, although they still gave signs of life, and danger in that direction was over. The great peril was the Revolution itself, which was already begun. Brother Claude inaugurated his generalship with the triumphant reign of the man who was dubbed " King Voltaire, " and who was at the same time the declared enemy of Jesus Christ and His Church, and the contemptuous enemy of the people. These make-believe democrats were, in the worst sense of the word, aristocrats, and no one dreaded more than they did the education of the lower classes. La Chalotais's words are well known, but they may be fitly quoted here : " Men who are only intended to handle the plane and the file ought not to be taught to read and write. The Brothers, by giving them education, ARE RUINING EVERYTHING? "

Another sectarian of the same school, M. de Langourla, at Rennes, cried out in the same spirit of concentrated rage: "We must, as I said to the King, hunt out those *Ignorantins*, those Brothers with the long sleeves, that Jesus rebukes in the person of the Pharisees, for the rascals teach people to handle the pen.



Brother Claude, third Superior general, born at Châtillon-sur-Loing, diocese of Sens, January 18th 1800, entered the Institute June 8th 1726, elected Superior general August 3rd 1751, resigned his post as Superior May 18th 1767 died at Saint Yon October 25th 1775. — Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Mouilleron.

which is such a dangerous weapon in certain hands." This epitomizes the whole system: "No education for the lowly ones, in order not to trouble the scepticism and tranquillity of the happy ones of this world."

What could the Brothers do in the midst of such a society? They had but to preserve intact the work of their blessed founder, and, as far as possible, continue it. To the partisans of ignorance, they could reply that they gave faith as a counter-balancing

power for science, while the purity and austere simplicity of their lives was the most complete answer they could make to the depraved morals and abounding scandals of the age. The more the age rebelled, the more disciplined and self-denying they became.

During Brother Claude's government, which lasted sixteen years, the Brothers only opened twelve new schools; they preferred to perfect the existing ones. This period seems to have been one of quiet work, during which nothing was changed in the admirable machinery set going by Blessed de la Salle. After Brother Claude, his successor, Brother Florence, was equally cautious of introducing any changes; his two principal administrative acts, the transfer of the Institute to Paris in March 1771¹ and its division into three provinces², were not really innovations so much as useful improvements.

Paris, however, was not to remain long, this time, the seat of that government which in the Institute is called the *Régime*, though it was evidently intended it should one day become it. An essentially catholic work, the Institute was in its origin principally French, and if there be a place fitting to be the centre of its action, that place is Paris.

Meantime, poverty and want were pressing hard on a great number of the schools, and, strange to say, the two most cruelly tried just then were Rouen and Rheims, those two towns so loved by the holy founder, in one of which he was born, the other in which he died. The Institute, however, came safe out of this battle for life and death. God was there, watching over His own work, sending help always at the last moment, now moving some charitable soul to bring alms to the distressed community, now inspiring the municipal authorities to hold out a hand to them.

To Brother Florence is due the credit of having understood

¹ On account of an attack made upon them by a Vicar general of Rouen, the Brothers came to Paris and lodged temporarily at the Saint Esprit, rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs. = ² Western (Paris); Southern (Avignon); Eastern (Marseilles).

that the Letters patent of Louis XV., which in 1724 had caused such joy to his predecessors, had become altogether inadequate, seeing that they only empowered the Brothers within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Rouen. Louis XVI., solicited by the sons of Blessed de la Salle, granted them the same privilege in



Brother Florence, fourth Superior general, born at Paroy, diocese of Metz, January 31st 1725, entered the Institute April 26th 1743, elected Superior general May 19th 1767, resigned his post as Superior August 10th 1777 died at Avignon January 14th 1800. — Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Mouilleron.

the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris, where the Brothers had no less than thirty - eight schools. It was in March 1777; this favor was not destined to profit to them long; but it gave the entire Order a considerable increase of importance, and remotely prepared its brilliant resurrection at the beginning of our century.

The Superiors broke down under the burden of their office,

and all, one after another, were obliged to tender their resignation; an offer which the Institute felt compelled to accept. What Brother Claude had done in 1767, Brother Florence did ten years afterwards, and each had an equal right to claim a rest from crushing and almost superhuman labors.

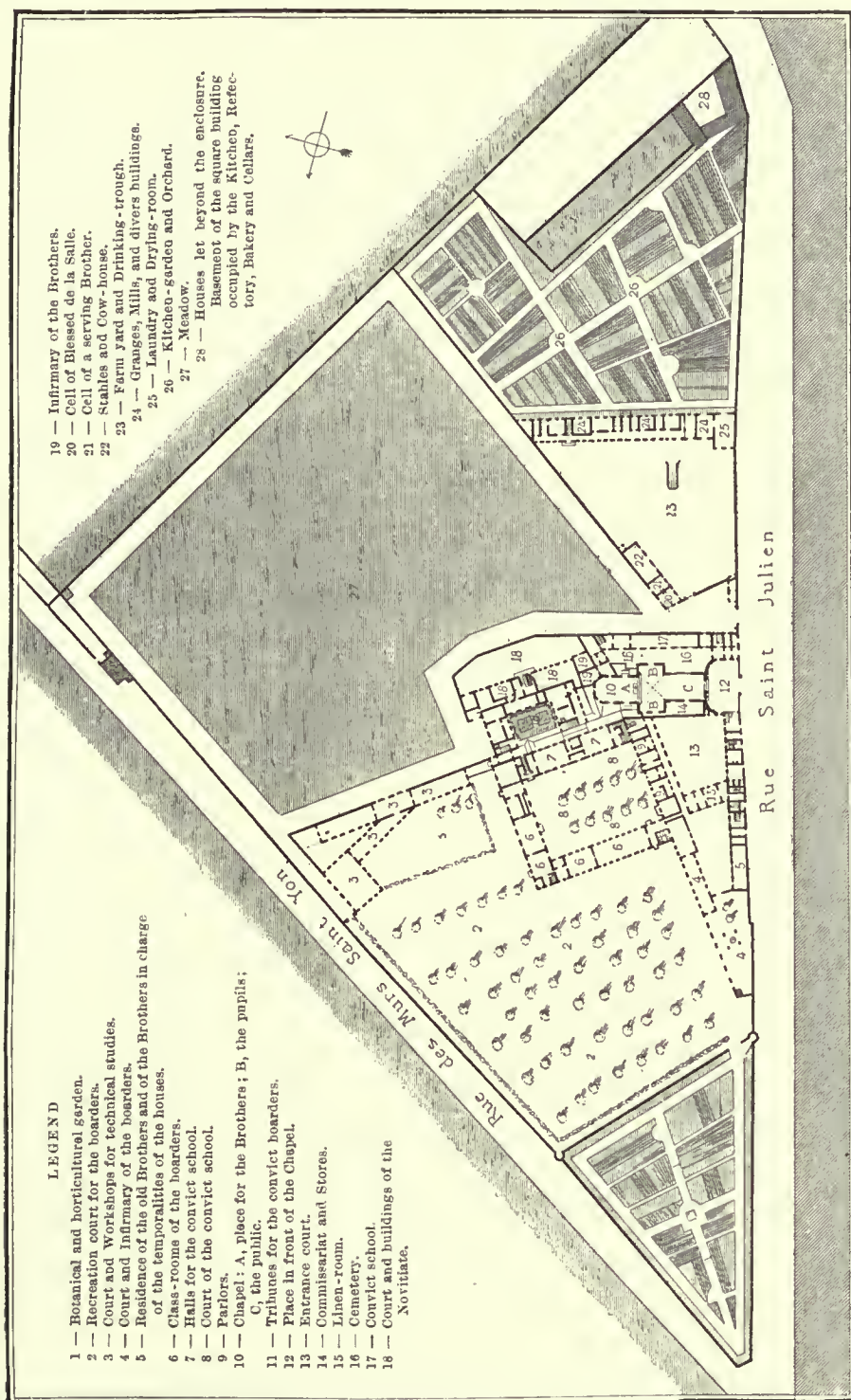
But the clouds were gathering, and the sky growing darker, as the storm approached. This is the moment to take cognizance of the work and the men it is about to destroy.

The eighteenth century was for the Brothers the age of pedagogy. They struck out then, as we have seen, into innumerable new pathes, which our age with all the unconsciousness of profound ignorance imagines it was the first to tread. It becomes necessary for us here to re-establish facts in their true position.

At a period when the children of the middle classes and the nobility were subjected to the sole and somewhat excessive severity of classical studies, the Brothers had the boldness to conceive and the hardihood to put into practice what we call to-day special and technical education. At Vannes, under the government of Brother Claude, classes of mathematics and hydrography are opened, here sailors are taught navigation and pilots are trained for their career.

At Cahors, a Brother teaches architecture and planimetry. In 1753, one of those drawing-classes, now all the fashion, was opened in Paris : " The Brother will teach drawing gratuitously to the children, and will perfect them in the art as far as is necessary to enable them to embrace successfully these different professions which, for their full exercise, require clever designers. "

At Castres, the programme of studies includes practical geometry, surveying and double-entry book-keeping ; at Cherbourg, horticulture and gardening are taught. We may notice here once more that our age vain-gloriously claims the discovering of these innova-



A complete plan of the house of Saint Yon, at Rouen (p. 448). — From contemporary documents.

tions, all the honor of which is due to the Institute of Blessed de la Salle. *Cuique suum*.

Nor is this all. To the Brothers is due the honor of having given to the boarding-school a larger, more generous and more intelligent form. If we look for an example of the types they have created, we need only point to that college of Fort-Royal at Martinique, concerning which so many valuable testimonies remain. Everywhere it is the same ideal, the same large and liberal plan of instruction, of convenience, of watchful care— vast buildings, fine grounds, promenades twice a week, neither the rod nor the ferula, moderate work, so that the minds of the children are not strained by over study. The Brothers, in their programme, foresaw from the first the dangers of that evil of modern education, overworked brains.

They have from the first also published excellent school-books, and will no doubt continue always to do so. Already Blessed de la Salle had invented the system of simultaneous teaching, and secured the adoption of books in the mother-tongue "to teach the children to read." But under the government of Brother Agathon, there appears a *Treatise on Arithmetic for the use of the Boarding-schools and the Parish-schools*, and a *New Abridgment of French Grammar*. Both of them are unpretending and indispensable master-pieces; they may have been surpassed since, but one is still astonished at the good sense that pervades them from beginning to end. Good sense is the chief weapon and the characteristic trait of the Brothers. At the end of the *Treatise on Arithmetic* there are models of bills, commercial letters, orders, bills of exchange, receipts; everything practical, in fact, and this practical side is one of the salient features of the Brothers' teaching. Their *Grammar* in those days was not, indeed, written according to the strict philological method; but we must remember that it was intended for children who did not know Latin, and that it will always be found difficult to apply the etymological system to works used by children and young girls. But the Brothers have in our days overtaken the last progress of philology, and the re-

cent edition of their *Grammar* may on this head bear comparison with the best and the most learned treatises¹. Every year there was some new pedagogical experiment amongst the Brothers, and many that succeeded marvellously. Such were the public examinations before the distribution of prizes, which date from the first years of Brother Florence's superiorship. The children were questioned by priests in catechism and sacred history; laymen questioned them on other subjects, and the effect was excellent. All this is none the worse for having the modern stamp on it.

Despite so many successful innovations, the Brothers obstinately refused to change the gratuitous character of the schools. They fought many a good and noble fight on this ground. "The establishment of the Brothers," says one of their most inveterate enemies, "introduced and spread the principle of gratuity all over the kingdom, along with an education in which all classes and conditions may share²." This enemy fancied he had hit upon a strong argument against the Brothers, whereas, unawares, he pronounces a noble panegyric on them.

But all these details of method are but secondary, after all; it is education itself that occupies the first place in the minds of all Christian souls. The great heresy of the nineteenth century is to place the instruction it over-estimates, above the education it despises. The Brothers have never fallen into this fatal error, and never tire of reading the *Explanation of Twelve Virtues of a Good Master*, in which Brother Agathon develops so profoundly the doctrine of Blessed de la Salle. This explanation is a whole treatise of Christian pedagogy, of which our modern masters would do well to assimilate the substance. They are most desirable, those twelve virtues, and it may be permitted to add that few masters possess them all— "gravity, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, self-restraint, gentleness, zeal, vigilance, piety and generosity." The enumeration of the faults to be avoided by the master would

¹ The same may be said of the whole series of their works on mathematics, French, geography, history, drawing, a vast collection, and one held in high esteem by the best judges. = ² Granet, lieutenant general of the seneschal's jurisdiction at Toulouse.

not perhaps satisfy certain tendencies of our day. Blessed de la Salle condemns amongst other imperfections "too great activity, eagerness, familiarity, joking, a habit of irony, too much self-concentration, presumption, and love of talking." As regards corporal punishments, Blessed de la Salle, in his *Management of Christian Schools*, inclines to replace them as much as possible by



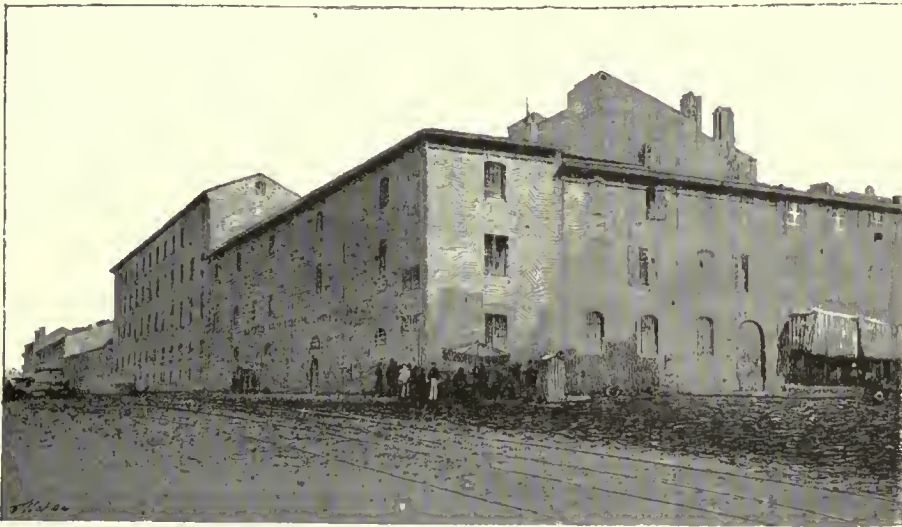
6-57, RUE DE L'ÉGLISE.

La Rosignolerie at Angers (p. 462). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Smeeton.

persuasion and gentleness. In the edition of 1720, they are still admitted, but they are regulated with the greatest wisdom, and in their general chapter of 1777 the Brothers end by doing away with them altogether. The whole history of elementary education in the last century is contained substantially in those decisions of their general chapters, where every question is raised and very many are solved.

Even the most perfect of human institutions are not yet to be at once understood and valued at their true price. What the eight-

eenth century admired most in the Brothers was their virtues and the visible benefits of their mission. On this point there were no limitations, there was no indifference; the enthusiasm was unanimous. At Nîmes, Bishop de Becdelièvre, contemporary of Brother Claude, declared publicly that he was highly satisfied with “the services rendered by the Brothers to religion and to the public in his episcopal town, as also with the exemplary lives they led.” The lieutenant general of the same town confirms in the name of so-



Old boarding-school at Marseilles. — Drawn by Thalée.

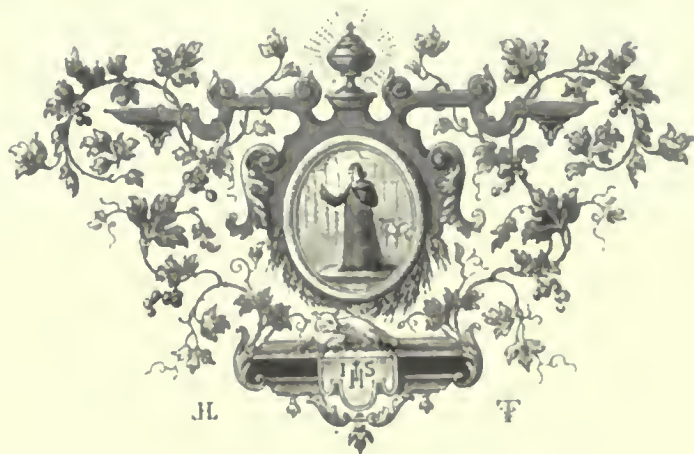
ciety this praise so complete in its measured terms. “This town,” he says, “derives infinite advantages from the establishment of the Brothers.” In his funeral oration of Bishop Herbaut, Abbé Fauchet is more explicit, and salutes the Brothers as “the wise masters of the indigent, and citizens as useful as certain flashing teachers of arts of luxury and frivolous sciences are hurtful.”

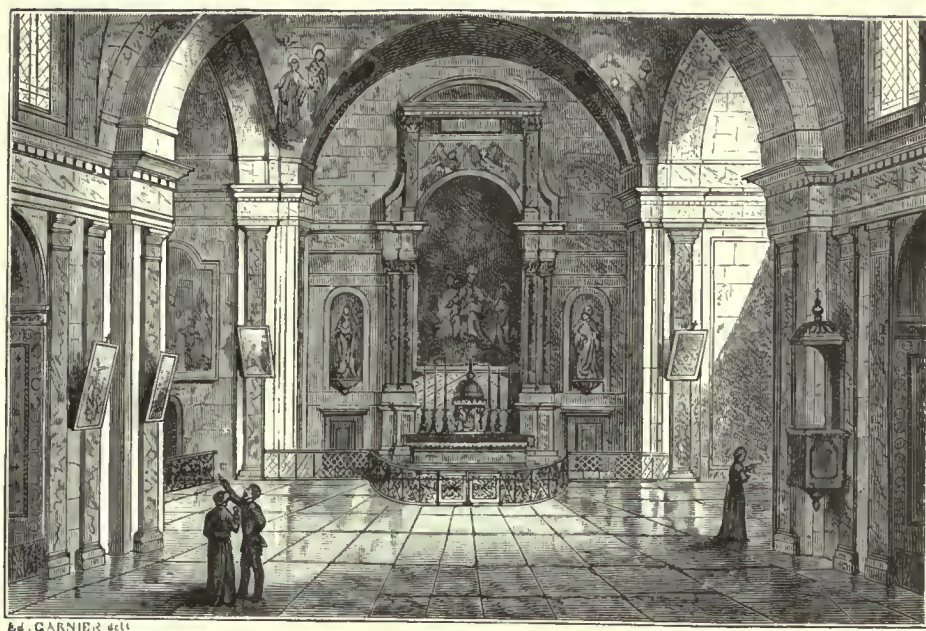
Where could we study the influence of the Brothers better than at Rouen? It was from Rouen that they came; here was their Novitiate; here was preserved the spirit of their founder. It is at Rouen that their praise resounds loudest, and it is Mgr de la Rochefoucauld, Archbishop of Rouen, who, on April 25th 1767, renders them the following signal tribute of justice:— “It remains

only to us to pray that God may preserve in the Religious of the Christian schools the spirit of their state, that holy fervor and strict observance of their Rule, that love of holy poverty and humiliations, that simplicity and modesty which have won them the esteem and confidence of the public¹. ”

We have under our eyes scores of documents of the same value, which we will not copy, for fear of tiring our readers. The Sovereign Pontiff has, however, condensed them all into a few words :— “ I have the highest possible regard for the Brothers. ” This testimony was pronounced in 1772 by Pope Clement XIV. It might be repeated to-day by Leo XIII.

¹ The holy prelate adds with eloquence : “ What is then grander than to preserve a Christian soul in its baptismal innocence up to manhood. There is not a Brother teacher who, if he be at all fervent, may not at the hour of death flatter himself with having done this for several souls. A preacher or a Doctor of Divinity, after fifty years labor, cannot, alas! be always sure of having obtained this result. ”





Ed. GARNIER del.

E. CHEVALLIER.

Church of the Carmelite Friars, where the massacres of September took place, and where Brother Salomon died (p. 475).
— Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by M^{lle} Chevalier.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT STORM : THE BROTHERS DURING THE REVOLUTION.

— GOVERNMENT OF BROTHER AGATHON (1777-1797).



WHEN the last echoes of the *Te Deum* had died away, and Brother Agathon found himself alone in his little cell on the evening of that memorable day, August the 10th 1777, and realized that he was now Superior of the Institute, the responsibility of his position must have stood out before him with terrible force. The perils that beset the Institute were imminent. There are

signs that herald the approaching storm, which the sailor is never mistaken in; these signs were visible in 1777.

The Church is not afraid of the storm, and does not dread the thunderbolt; but she takes precautions on the approach of bad weather. Brother Agathon thought it was both useless and dangerous to tremble; but he made ready.

Two Assistants seemed to him insufficient to help him in so vast a government; he asked for four¹; he gave a definite form to the three provinces, whose elements were henceforth clearly determined²; he had put into execution the ninety-three decrees of the general chapter of 1777. There was then only one scholasticate, that of Saint Yon at Rouen; he created three others, at Marseilles, at Maréville and at the Rossignolerie of Angers; he considered that it was not prudent to leave the administration in Paris, so he transferred it to Melun. Always anxious to obtain publicly the support of the civil authority, he got Louis XVI. to extend the privileges of the Institute to the whole province of the Parliament of Toulouse, and took care to have these letters registered by the said Parliament on March 11th 1778; he went on fighting stoutly against the writing-masters, and asserting the principle of gratuitous education. All this was done without undue agitation, as is ever the case with truly Catholic souls and institutions. While the storm rages, they look to the blue sky that will follow after the tempest, and quietly prepare for the coming sunshine.

There were still many consoling sights to be seen, and amongst these might be reckoned the Novitiate of Saint Yon, where one hundred and twenty-five young Brothers edified all Rouen. These fervent novices were not without their radiant day-dreams either, and the possible beatification of their founder held a foremost place in these. Brother Agathon gave orders to search out all documents bearing on this august cause. Some time had, perhaps, been lost, and if so, it was necessary to make up for it.

As, on the eve of a great battle, the captain in command reviews

¹ Brief of Pius VI., July 11th 1777. = ² See the exact composition of these three provinces in the *Annals of the Institute of the Brothers*, vol. II. p. 418.

his army, and tries also, if he be worthy of his high trust, to ascertain the temper and disposition of his troops; so did the Superior of the Brothers review the soldiers of Christ before the



Melun, and the house of the Brothers, from a colored sketch of the eighteenth century.
— Drawn by E. Clair-Guyot.

supreme struggle. He studied closely the various elements of this elect army, and, when it was desirable, modified his plan of battle. The organization of the great elective assemblies of the Institute was what first attracted his attention. With admirable foresight he set about obtaining from the Holy See a decree confirming the

customs established in the Congregation for the convocation of the general Chapters and the election of Superiors. The Chapter of 1787 received this pontifical deed with joy, and Brother Agathon secured its effect by registering the letters patent of Louis XVI. From this forth it was decided that the houses where there were seven Brothers should take the name of " principal houses, " and that fifteen directors of these houses, with fifteen " ancient Brothers " elected by secret ballot and by a majority of votes of all the professed Brothers, should concur in the election of the Superior and the Assistants. The former Superiors and the Brothers who had shared in the administration might be directly convoked. During this same session, mindful of the past as of the future, the general Chapter decided " that each house should possess its own archives wherein should be related, according as they happened, all interesting facts, as well as its labors and developments. "

This admirable idea, which seems so far ahead of the current notions of the period, although at an earlier period it was a universal custom in religious houses, and formed the basis, sometimes even the substance, of our national chronicles, has not been sufficiently noticed. If the prescription of the Chapter of 1787 had been carried out, we should possess at the present day the most valuable documents for writing an exhaustive history of primary education. If all our parishes had done likewise, we should not be at a loss, as we sometimes are, to fix the exact state of ancient France. We may be, at least, permitted here to admire the rare intelligence which the sons of Blessed de la Salle displayed in recording their works, and thus preparing the annals of the Institute.

It was at this time that all the treatises of Blessed de la Salle were reprinted. Brother Agathon, considering it a duty to gather up and condense the traditions of the Institute, published the *Explanation of the Twelve Virtues of a Good Master*, already mentioned, and which appeared in Rome in 1797 under the more pretentious title of *Manuale di Maestro di Scuola*.

Strange to say, the French edition of the *Twelve Virtues* appeared on the very eve of the taking of the Bastille; we call attention to these dates, which have an eloquence of their own. When the great storm burst, the Brothers were ready. The evolution of their pedagogy was nearly finished. Their class-books were in



Brother Agathon, fifth Superior general, born at Longueval, diocese of Noyon, April 4th 1731; entered the Institute October 20th 1747; elected Superior general August 10th 1777; died at Tours September 15th 1797.
— Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Moulleron.

everybody's hands. Their primary schools, their professional and special schools were in full vigor and prosperity. According to statistics of 1778, they numbered seven hundred and sixty masters, who were directing one hundred and fourteen houses, four hundred and twenty classes, and thirty-one thousand children. Their discipline was incomparable, and everything in the order was wisely foreseen and regulated. They formed a kind of monarchy, Christianly democratic, with free and intelligent elections, wherein

all the grades of the Institute were represented. The general Chapters were held with extraordinary regularity, like States into which neither passion nor party hatred penetrated. All was going well, and the Institute might have taken for its motto—*Ordo, lucidus ordo*.

Suddenly the cry resounded—“The Bastille is taken!” It was not a riot that had been put down, but a revolution that had been begun.

Step by step, inch by inch, the Institute resisted. It resisted without violence, without declamation or uproar, but with indomitable and placid energy. Brother Agathon followed with intense anxiety the debates of the assemblies, and when, on the 13th of February 1790, the Constituent Assembly suppressed monastic vows, he took note of the closing sentence of that famous article 2 which rules that “for the present nothing is to be changed concerning houses charged with public education.” His brow cleared, and he exclaimed: “Then, there is nothing changed for us.” He forthwith sent up a solemn address to the Assembly in the name of the Brothers. Addresses were the fashion just then. This one was dignified almost to coldness:—“If you decide to suppress us,” it said, “we will submit to the law; but we hope with great confidence that you will not add to the pain of our political annihilation that of being reduced to want.”

Noble words, assuredly, but which could have no effect. ‘89 was advancing rapidly to ‘93, dragged down a fatal incline, as 1848 was afterwards dragged to the riots of June, and 1870 to the Commune. Such is the law of history, and there is no escape from it. There were moments of reprieve now and then, and the decree of September 26th 1790 decided that “Congregations and communities whose object was education will for the present continue their functions under the same laws and the former management. These revolutionists had not, in fact, masters ready to their hand, and were sadly at a loss to extend education to all classes of citizens; but hatred, at last, carried the day, and we know how they threw off the mask in their Civil

Constitution of the clergy. The 22nd of March 1791 there appeared another decree in which the Brothers felt they were aimed at:—
 “ No PROFESSOR can continue any function or fill any place in establishments belonging to public education, unless he have first TAKEN THE CIVIL OATH. ”



Institute of the Brothers of Christian schools in 1792.

There was a word in this clause which demanded explanation—what was to be understood by “ public function, ” and were the Brothers properly speaking functionaries? From the days of Blessed de la Salle, no more important question had ever been raised. It was a matter of life and death for the Institute.

We must say it to the eternal glory of the Brothers, they did not hesitate an instant about the taking of the oath; all answered—“No!” Everyone of them, heroically sincere, repeated with prophetic instinct the noble words of Brother Philip-Joseph: “Let us sacrifice everything, even our lives if needful, to obey the laws of our country; but let us stop where sin begins.” These words may be taken as the pure and true Christian formula; it would be impossible to find an expression at the same time more Catholic and more French.

On the 3rd of June 1791, the doors of the Novitiate of Saint Yon were broken open by the soldiery. Brother Quentin, who was Director then, replied quietly to the invaders: “I will never take the oath because my conscience forbids it.” And he added—“I do not fulfil any public function.” But the rioters were past listening to reason; justice had given way to violence. Violence, however, could not overcome souls so valorous and strong. The sixty-two Brothers of Saint Yon pronounced each the same emphatic “No,” and declared their inviolable fidelity to the Church of Rome. The tyrants did not venture farther that day. The lawyer Boieldieu wrote a long and able petition on behalf of the Brothers, and the district of Rouen sent up the affair to the Director of the department, which left the Brothers of Saint Yon free to continue their work “until the National Assembly should have passed a decree concerning the fate of the Institute.”

The party in power did not show the same moderation everywhere. At Rennes, the Brothers were thrown into prison; at Marseilles, the populace rose, and cried out for them to be put to death; at Melun, the Attorney general asked the Director of the department if “these *amphibious* ecclesiastics had conformed to the law;” at Rouen, Luneville, Rheims, Châteaudun, Nogent-le-Rotrou, Avanches, Moulins, Brest, Arles, the direction of the public schools is rudely taken from them. There was, indeed, no one to take their part in the Assembly, and their attitude before the Constitutional bishops was not calculated to disarm the Revolution. They did

not recognize these renegades, and shut their doors against them inexorably.

The Brothers were persecuted in some places, like their founder and like their Saviour, while in others the people venerated them and would not have them molested. “ Without the Brothers, what will become of the children of the poor? Who will teach them? ” was the popular cry¹.

At Chartres, Saint Malo, Laon, Saint Brieuc, at Castres above all, this popular feeling was very strong; but it was unavailing. The Revolution swamped everything.

On the 18th of August 1792, the death-blow was dealt at the Institute. “ Considering, ” says the decree of the National Assembly, “ that a really free State cannot suffer in its midst any corporation, not even those which, devoted to public instruction, have deserved well of the nation, lay corporations, such as those of the Brothers of the Christian school, are suppressed. ”

This was conclusive, and resistance was henceforth vain. The schools were now everywhere violently broken into, the Brothers flung out into the street, the children let loose, their books torn to shreds or burnt, alphabets destroyed, lights put out, and the reign of ignorance proclaimed. The Superior general quitted Melun in haste and withdrew to Paris. He was forced to take off his religious habit, and try to get bread by giving lessons. Yet what crime had this just man committed? He was, like so many others at that period, “ suspected of being a suspect, ” and consequently he was proscribed and run to earth. The Revolution had withdrawn the title of French citizens from the illustrious Benedictines of Saint Maur, who had done so much for the glory of France; and now the same Revolution hunted these humble Brothers, sprung from the people and of the people still, who were teaching forty thousand little French boys the elements of knowledge!

One trial, or rather one supreme consolation was still in store

¹ The exact words of the municipality of Chartres.

for the Brothers— the trial of blood, the consecration of martyrdom. It was not long delayed, and amongst the glorious victims of Carmel, there was a son of Blessed de la Salle. His name was Brother Salomon, and he had been secretary of the Superior general. This was a great glory for the Institute. In every Catholic foundation, there is this baptism of blood, and, without it, no foundation rises into an edifice. A miniature of the fifteenth century represents all the Saints working like masons at the building up of the Church. The blood of the martyrs was the cement.

Brother Salomon was not the only witness that God demanded of the Institute. Many Brothers were imprisoned, and the names of these captives are engraved in letters of gold on the wall of the Institute, and in letters of fire on the hearts of their descendants. These are to the Brothers what the diptychs were to the primitive Church.

The executioners, no doubt, felt they were inconsistent in striking down these popular masters, they who preached so loudly the education of the people; but we must not look for consistency in these terrible times. Other Brothers had the signal honor of shedding their blood with that of Brother Salomon. Brother Raphael, of Uzès, was seventy-two years of age when he was denounced. Denunciation was the characteristic of the Revolution. The poor old Brother was lying infirm on his bed; when he beheld his executioners, he exclaimed— “ But, how is this? I see some of my old pupils amongst you! ” And then he added— “ Did I not sacrifice my days and my health for you? Do you forget how I taught you to love and fear God? ”

But these generous words of recrimination only enraged still more the wretched madmen; they beat him to death on the spot¹.

Nor was this the last limit of their hatred : transportation then was worse than death. Worn out with slaughter, the sanguinary

¹ See *Annals of the Institute of Brothers*, p. 632 and following.





fanatics of the Revolution took it into their heads to get rid of the Christians who were in their way by transporting them as far off as possible. We shudder still to the very marrow of our bones in reading the accounts of the Brothers thus dealt with. "We suffered almost all that men can be made to suffer. We lay on boards, piled up and huddled together till we could scarcely breathe.



Massacre in the church of the Carmelite Friars, fac-simile of a rare print. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; eugraved by Rousseau.

We had each barely two yards of space in length and about half a yard in width. The heat was so intense, that we seemed to be in an oven; we were devoured by vermine. We longed for death as for a mercy. To more than two-thirds of us was this deliverance granted ¹.

Thus speaks Brother Christopher, confined on board the *Bonhomme Richard*. In listening to him, one's blood runs cold with horror. They died, these gentle victims; they offered up their lives in those foul hulks. But martyrdom is not the only witness we can

¹ *Annals of the Institute*, vol. II, p. 642. Letter of Brother Christopher and Abbé Bienaimé. Cf. the narrative of one of the captives of *The Washington*.

produce in favor of Truth disarmed and vanquished. There is also the testimony of words. This testimony is given by several Brothers who were imprisoned. There was at Rennes a Brother Martien who replied proudly to his judges :— “ I direct a free school. If your protestations of love for the people are sincere, if your principles of fraternity are not a vain and hypocritical formula, my functions justify me, and, far from being imputed to me as a crime, they give me a sacred claim on your gratitude. ” In answer to this, he was executed. Perhaps neither ancient nor modern eloquence could produce a nobler speech than this one of Brother Martien's, which he paid for with his life.

Soon after, they wanted to force a Brother to assist at the Revolutionary festivals ; but with unflinching firmness he replied :— “ I am a good Catholic, and these ceremonies are an insult to our worship, which is Divine and thrice holy. God forbid that I should ever authorize by my presence ceremonies which I believe dishonorable to religion. I had rather suffer persecution, prison, death itself, than offend the Lord God, and be a stumbling block for many ! ”

If all true Catholics had had the courage to meet the Revolution as Brother Philip-Joseph met it, they might have checked its impious and triumphant course.

We are now in 1794, and the spectacle presented by the Institute is not a consoling one. The Superior general was in Paris, where under a secular disguise he gained a miserable livelihood by giving lessons in mathematics. All the Brothers are dispersed ; there is no government, no centre ; some have enlisted ; others accepted public situations, the greater number were trying to turn to account their former occupation and to get work as public or private tutors. But the old times are all gone.

No more regular communities, no more schools on whose walls hang the Crucifix and the image of the Virgin Mother. Where are they all now, the little children who were trained to be strong

¹ Letter of Brother Philip-Joseph of Elbeuf.

Christians? What has become of the black gown, the broad brimmed hat, the white collar? Above all, what has become of the church where all heard mass on Sunday? All gone; all swallowed up in the night. Is it so? O men of little patience, wait yet a while. Do you not see a white streak on the horizon? It is the dawn of day.





Paris. — House of the Brothers at Rue Ondinot. — Drawn by Hubert Clerget; engraved by Barlant.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER THE STORM.

— THE INSTITUTE FROM THE END OF THE REIGN OF TERROR
UP TO THE ELECTION OF BROTHER PHILIP IN 1838.



AFTER a great battle, soldiers of the same regiment, separated or wounded on the field, go painfully in search of their flag; this is their first care and their greatest anxiety. They are to be seen, uneasy and hesitating, dragging their steps across the vast plain, peering at all the uniforms, looking anxiously into all the groups, until at last they come to the longed-for spot where, clustering round the flag riddled with bullets, are their

brothers in arms, comrades and officers and commander. “ Ah, here is the regiment!” they cry, and at once they fall into rank with it.

So it came to pass with the Institute of Blessed de la Salle the day after the reign of Terror. But it was a "day after" that lasted for many a year. The Brothers sought anxiously for their troops dispersed during the battle; they too rallied their regiment, and there are few finer sights than that of the scattered Order reconstituting its ranks, and reforming its unity.

We have seen how the Brothers were forced to abandon their religious habit, and condemned, in order to live, to enroll themselves in the armies of the Republic, or to accept secular employment. Hunted and pursued everywhere, some had the happy inspiration of going to join the community in Rome; but, in those days, the journey was a long and costly one, and this was an alternative within the reach of only a few. It was as teachers that the Brothers had rendered service to the public, and this resource they still held. The black soutane was wanting, it is true; but in the secular dress they were equally capable of continuing the traditions of Blessed de la Salle. Thus we see them courageously beginning to open day-schools and boarding schools again to the great joy of the populations which had remained Christian. But no one could tell what was going to become of the Institute.

The year 1795 opened, therefore, sadly enough; but here we must consider it under another aspect, one which deserves to be closely studied by historians in search of truth. There was a general revival of Christian feeling, and the inhabitants of several thousands of communes demanded energetically the re-opening of their churches. These petitions, covered with signatures, are still preserved in our archives, and they are very significant. With the churches, the schools were opened, and the people wanted them to be Christian. This was the moment to remember the Brothers and call out for them. Now it was that, supported by the prayers of the martyrs it had given to the Church, and strengthened by the example of their self-sacrifice, the Institute was enabled to gather its scattered members together, resume its mission of charity, and spread itself over the world.

We have said that a certain number of Brothers had become public teachers, and it is thanks to them that the faith was preserved by the new generation. They had kept the traditions of the Institute, and made it their duty to teach Christian doctrine before



Pius VI. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier, from a portrait of the time; engraved by Napier.

anything else. Sometimes even, they supplemented, as far as was possible, the ecclesiastical ministry, which the priests who had not taken the civil oath—the *insermentés*, as they were called—could not perform. Thus Brother Bernardin, at Castres, collected the faithful every day in the church, and recited morning and evening prayers; every Sunday, he read the mass aloud to them,

and made them sing canticles, and addressed a little discourse to them, endeavoring to rekindle the light of faith in their poor benighted souls. The Brothers, in a word, helped them to wait for the return of the priests, acting, so to speak, as the precursors of the latter.

But, all this time, they were without tidings of the Superior general; consequently the Institute, as yet, had no visible head. Under these conditions, unity was impossible. Pius VI. understood this, and displayed in the emergency that wonderful clear-sightedness which has always distinguished the government of the Popes. In the place of Brother Agathon, he delegated provisionally, in 1793, Brother Frumence, Superior of the house in Rome; but, mindful of established rights, the Sovereign Pontiff only attributed to him the title of Vicar general. Brother Agathon, wherever he was, remained the real Superior. The Institute was saved.

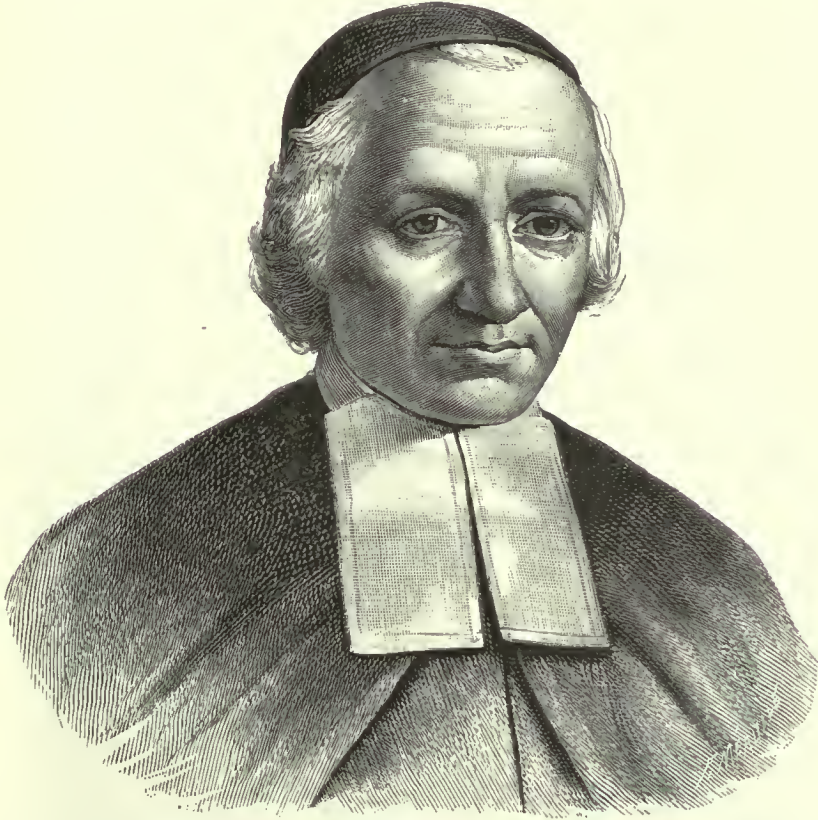
Brother Agathon had been obliged to take refuge at Tours, and to remain there several years. As soon as he heard of the decision of the Pope, he wrote to Brother Frumence, and begged of him to replace him until circumstances would permit of his returning to his post. This return was a hope destined quickly to perish. The severe hardships which Brother Agathon had undergone had ruined his health, and he died in 1797 before witnessing the reconstitution of the Institute. He saw the promised land, but he never reached it.

Brother Frumence continued, consequently, to direct the Institute, but always with the title of Vicar general. It was not until 1810 that Brother Gerbaud was named Superior general.

According, however, as tranquillity returned, and the Church re-opened her temples, the Brothers collected here and there, re-organizing their old communities at Lyons, Rheims, Laon,

and Paris. This was, in truth, the essential thing to do, and the Brothers saw this clearly. To create little centres which could be successively linked on to the general Vicariate, such was the plan wisely conceived, and faithfully carried out.

This activity was nowhere more necessary than in Paris, and

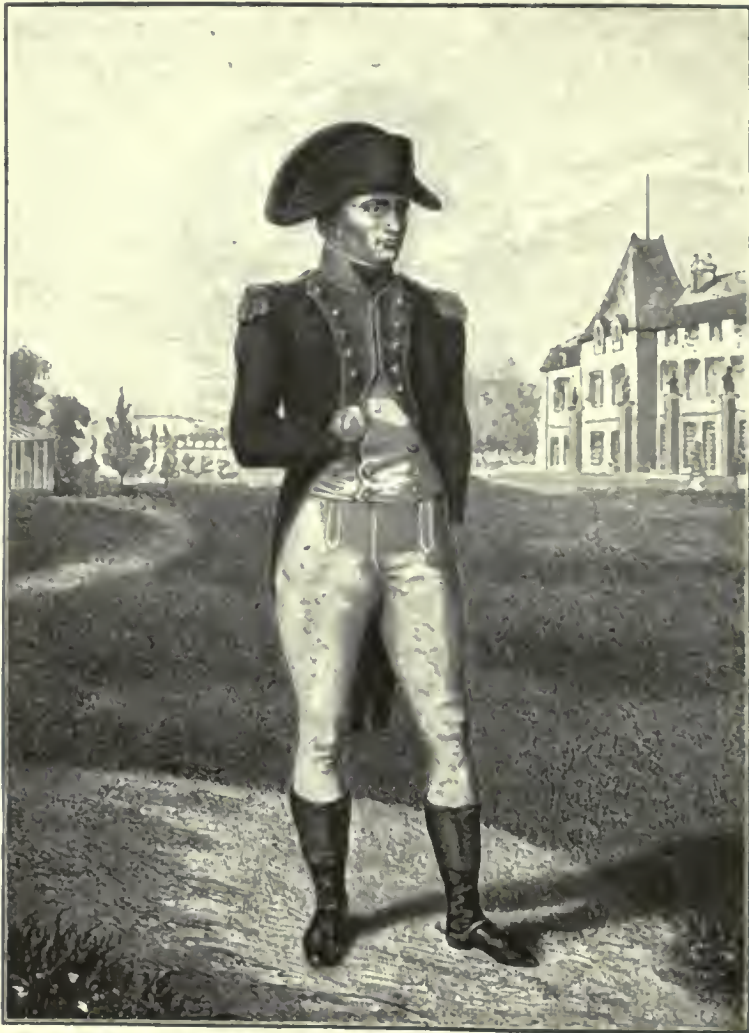


Brother Frumence, Vicar general, born at Mesnil-Martinsart, March 30th 1747; entered the Institute October 30th 1763; named Vicar general by Pius VI. August 7th 1795; died at Lyons January 27th 1810. Engraved by Méaulle from a drawing by Mouilleron.

the Brothers understood as much. Brother Gerbaud, Director of the school at Gros-Caillou, succeeded in getting the school approved by the First Consul, and this was an advance of which few realized the importance at first. It needed time to manifest the wisdom of it.

All these efforts were, nevertheless, condemned to remain barren unless the Congregation could be reconciled to the civil power.

Its whole future lay here. Taking advantage of the influence of Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Bonaparte and a particular friend of the Brothers, Brother Gerbaud strove to get its existence once



Bonaparte, First Consul (p. 485), from a picture by Isabey. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Levasseur.

more recognized. He wrote to Brother Frumence, who joined in his efforts, and in December 1803, thanks to the intervention of the Cardinal, a decree given on the strength of Portalis's report "re-established in France the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine,"

and authorized them to fix their head quarters at Lyons. This decree brought the Institute back to life.



L. Chovin

J. Cabarteux Sc

Portalis (p. 486), from a portrait in the Museum of Versailles. — Drawn by Chovin; engraved by Cabarteux.

The consular decision of the 11th Frimaire, year XII., was, indeed, of the highest importance to the Brothers; it recognized

them officially as a teaching body; later it permitted them to claim this character and to defend their traditional method, which thus received a sort of legal consecration.

The city of Lyons showed itself worthy of the honor which the First Consul paid it when he chose it for the seat of the Congregation. Appreciating at their just value " these Brothers of the



School at Gros-Caillois (p. 498). Fac-simile of a coarse print of the period, by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Levasseur.

Christian Doctrine so renowned for elementary education, " it immediately took advantage of the good dispositions of the government to organize new schools, and develop the germs of the little community which Brother Pigmenion had re-organized.

There was something very touching in these new beginnings of schools at Lyons. Brother Pigmenion was a manly soul whom nothing disheartened. He knew that those works most blessed by heaven are generally marked with the sign of the Cross, and it

was in this spirit that he courageously opened his school at Lyons, May 3rd 1802. The beginnings were very hard. When the brave teacher found the work pressing too heavily on his unaided



Mlle de Chamillart, marquise de Villeneuve-Trans, benefactress of the Institute, and especially of the school of Gros-Cailhou (p. 498).

— Engraved by Méaulle, from a portrait belonging to the Brothers of Gros-Cailhou.

strength, he would cheer himself up with the reflection : “ God will send me some fellow-workers as soon as He sees they are necessary.” And so it was. The fellow-workers came, and soon after they were allowed to resume their religious costume.

A man named Bernard Charpieux, mayor of the western district of Lyons, and who was wholly devoted to the Brothers, left nothing undone to obtain this permission for them. He also used his influence with Portalis to get the Little College as a residence for the Brothers. "The austerity of their morals," he wrote, "their disinterestedness and their virtues commend these admirable men to the kindness of the authorities and the veneration of fathers of families."

Not satisfied with laboring to procure a lodging for the Brothers, Bernard Charpieux wished the world to know the honor and esteem in which the city of Lyons held them. He arranged for them a prominent place in the solemn festivities which the town was making ready in honor of the passing of the Pope beneath its walls. He kept Brother Vivien at Lyons up to that date after bringing him from Rheims to consult him about the organisation of the new schools. He also secured the presence of Brother Bernardin, a notable member of the Institute, then at Toulouse. There was something very appropriate in the great Catholic city of Lyons thus marshalling before the head of the Church distinguished members of an Order whose noble mission it was to train the children of France to the duties of men, citizens and Christians.

Pius VII. was sitting in the chair of Peter, and the beauty of his holiness was a light to all Christendom. His firm and tender soul had to struggle, not alone against the Revolution, but against an almost omnipotent despotism. First, he was flattered in order to lure him to Paris to crown the new Emperor. Pius VII. thought that it was his duty to place the crown on that formidable brow. He quitted Rome, and, passing through Lyons, remained a few hours in the old city of Gaul which had been ennobled by the blood shed there by Irenæus and Blandina. Then, after being acclaimed by the Lyonese, he pursued his way to Paris, where he was to crown the Sovereign who then seemed full of deference for him as head of the Church. On his return to Italy, Pius VII. had more time to devote to Lyons, and profited by it to visit and bless the houses of the Brothers, whose Vicar general had gone to France

in his suite. But we should read the memoirs and newspapers of the period to form an adequate notion of the enthusiasm provoked all over France by the mere sight of the Sovereign Pontiff. The terror and the sacrileges of the Revolution were scarcely over; these Christians, only yesterday pursued and persecuted, were



CHOVIN.

L. CHAPON

Pius VII. (p. 490), from a portrait by David. — Drawn by Chovin; engraved by Chapon.

suddenly permitted to see the Holy Father and to receive him with festive joy. For the Brothers, it was a kind of double resurrection, for the Institute rose up again from the dead with religion.

In order to conform to the decree of 3rd Messidor, year XII., which obliged “religious aggregations,” as they said then, to submit their statutes to the Council of State, the Brothers sent the principal articles of their Rule to Paris by abbé Jauffret.

Unfortunately, they forgot that the Council of State was not very favorable to religious associations, and fancied themselves obliged to enumerate all the practices imposed on them by their interior discipline. The Councillors of State were too foreign to the spirit which inspired the congregations not to take fright at this long exposition, and the visa was refused. But this refusal had not any vexatious result, and thanks to the decision of Frimaire year XII., they continued to enjoy the legal existence which had been granted them.

On the 8th of September 1805, they put on once more their religious habit, and the Institute resumed by degrees its progressive march.

What they wanted now was subjects which would have enabled Brother Frumence to respond to the demands that were coming in from different cities. This was now his chief pre-occupation. It was a great problem to be solved, but Providence helped them to the solution. Cardinal Fesch, full of solicitude for an Institute so useful to religion, had the happy inspiration of writing to all the Brothers who had been dispersed by the Revolution, and inviting them to return to the bosom of their old religious family. Nothing could have been more simple, or more efficacious than this measure. Many Brothers knew nothing about the re-establishment of the Community, and received the Cardinal's invitation as a joyful surprise. "My children," said a teacher to his scholars in the hamlet of Chatuzange on receiving the letter, "I was a Brother of the Christian schools, and it was with deep regret I found myself compelled to leave my vocation. I hear that our Institute has been re-established, and therefore I must make haste to Lyons and take back my place there. If amongst you there are any who would like to enter the Institute, I will do all I can to facilitate their admission, and to help them to become accustomed to the new life." We merely quote these words as an example and a specimen. Similar ones were pronounced in many places. Numbers replied to the Cardinal's appeal. Not content with bringing to Brother Frumence their



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own zeal, several inspired young men whom they had educated with the desire to embrace the same religious vocation.

Brother Philip whom neither France nor the Institute can soon forget, was one of the disciples of the master whose words we



Cardinal Fesch. (p. 486). — Engraved by Méaulle, from a portrait of the period.

have just quoted. Surely the harvest reaped from the sowing of these words has been rich and abundant.

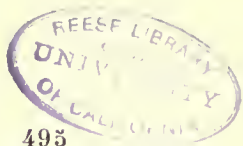
Lyons remained still the seat of the Institute. It was here the new recruits crowded; it was from here they were sent forth to all parts of France. The unity of the Institute was reconstructed. In becoming again one, it became again great.

It now became possible to satisfy the municipalities who, according to a magistrate of 1806, "were eagerly demanding those teachers who directed the schools before the Revolution." In the month of December 1805 thirty-six towns had made the same demand. From 1805 to 1807, Chartres, Trévoux, Saint Étienne, Ajaccio, Besançon and Saint Omer, together with two parishes in Paris, were able to get Brothers to direct their schools. The hive of Lyons was sending forth swarms of bees in every direction.

Meantime, the Imperial government was preparing a scheme of general education which was to modify the position of the Congregation. On the 10th of May 1806 a law was voted ordering the formation, under the title of the Imperial University, of a body charged exclusively with public teaching and education throughout the whole Empire. The promulgation of this law is one of the most important facts of the nineteenth century. The Institute of the Brothers was destined to be seriously affected by it.

The Council of State proceeded at once to study the decree which was to regulate the character of the new institution, and the discussion raised on the subject brought out proofs of the lively interest which Napoleon took in the Brothers. "Some persons pretend," he said in a sitting of the Council, "that the primary schools kept by the Brothers '*Ignorant's*' might introduce a bad spirit into the University, and want to have them left outside its jurisdiction. I can't understand the kind of fanaticism that seems to possess certain persons against these Brothers; it is a pure prejudice. From all sides people are calling out to me for their re-establishment, and this general demand proves how useful they are." The decree was not definitively promulgated till the 17th of March 1808, and article 109 runs as follows:—"The Brothers of the Christian schools are patented and encouraged by the Grand Master, who will sign and approve their internal statutes, admit them to the oath, prescribe a particular habit for them, and overlook their schools. The Superiors of this congregation may be members of the University."

Some may have regretted this incorporation of the Brothers



with the University, and this apparent blow struck at the principle of their independence; but, in reality, it was rather a subject for congratulation, thanks to the liberal spirit of M. de Fontanes, and the Chancellor, Bishop de Villaret. The Brothers have retained an excellent recollection of M. de Fontanes. Indeed, if the congregation had remained isolated, it would have had a very unequal struggle to keep up against an administration that was often irritating and encroaching, and against a tendency to dangerous centralization; whereas, lost in the ranks of State functionaries, the Brothers were able to profit by the advantages which resulted from this circumstance, while preserving that liberty by which they set so much store.

That position was not altogether free from dangers and trouble, however. The Minister of the Interior wanted to place the free schools under the direction of the Relieving Offices, and this plan was first mooted at Lyons and at Rheims. This proves how little idea the administration had of respecting the freedom of the schools. The municipality of Lyons and Cardinal Fesch, who had both done so much to obtain the cooperation of the Brothers, stoutly resisted this arbitrary attempt; but at Rheims the Minister accomplished his design, and the Relieving Office was charged with the direction of the primary schools. The want of funds having compelled the Office to impose school payment on two thirds of the children, the Brothers found themselves placed in direct contradiction to the statutes of their order, which forbade them to take any payment whatsoever from the scholars. This abnormal situation delayed the reunion of their Community with the Institute several years.

According to the decree of 1808, the statutes of the Brothers ought to have been signed by the Grand Master of the University; Brother Frumence conformed to this decree by forwarding to M. de Fontanes, on the 1st of July 1809, the fundamental rules which governed, and still govern, the congregation.

On the 7th of January 1810, this holy Religious, who had been charged by Pius VI. with the government of the Institute during

the period of the Brothers' dispersion, was called to his reward. Brother Frumence, in reality, never bore any title but that of Vicar general; although he was practically Superior of the Institute during the most difficult times it ever passed through. When



M. de Fontanes (p. 495). — Engraved by Meaulle, from a portrait of the period.

the Sovereign Pontiff instituted him Vicar, it seemed as if all hope was lost, and the Brothers, in 1798, were reduced to the two communities of Ferrara and Orvieto. In France, they could only bear the name of Brothers at Laon and Valence. So things were in Brother Frumence's early time.

Twelve years later, when he cast a glance from his death-bed over his dear Congregation, it was a glance of supreme consola-

tion. The Institute was in full vitality, and after his departure a real Superior would be elected. The temporary state of things in-



E. D. GARNIER, del.

Abbé Émery (p. 498). — Drawn by Édouard Garnier from a portrait of the period, engraved by Méaulle.

dedicated by the title of Vicar which he had borne would now cease. Nothing was wanting to the Order but a distinct and visible head; its schools were flourishing, the observance of the Rule was strict. Brother Frumence died happy, offering his present joys and hopes to God, as he had formerly offered Him his anguish and his tears.

Brother Gerbaud, who on the morrow of the Revolution founded the Gros-Caillon school, and had been one of the most active promoters of the re-establishment of the Brothers in France, was elected Superior general in 1810. This election took place on the 8th of September, the day the Church celebrates the Nativity of Our Lady, and sings, before the *Magnificat*, that glorious anthem :— “ Thy Nativity, O Virgin Mother, has announced joy to the whole world. ” The Institute of the Brothers, which had just come to life again, responded abundantly to the hymn of joy.

The Gros-Caillon school, where Brother Gerbaud has left such lasting remembrances, was the first opened in Paris by the Brothers after the restoration of Catholic worship. The history of this school alone would make a beautiful book. It was founded by the marquise de Villeneuve-Trans, who, in 1793, was rescued from the scaffold by the good population of Gros-Caillon, and desired to give them this public proof of her gratitude. There is a charming portrait of the foundress, which we wished our readers to see. Certain prints of the time have also sent down to us the physiognomy of her school. All these facts were imprinted in the soul of Brother Gerbaud when he was elected Superior, and he never forgot Gros-Caillon.

Some days before Brother Gerbaud's election, the Congregation received back its statutes with the approval of the University, one slight change being made concerning the dispensation from vows by the Pope. This message was accompanied by a letter from Abbé Emery, assuring the Brothers of the interest he took in them. Abbé Emery always loved the Brothers, who felt honored by the friendship of so holy a priest, so valiant a confessor of the faith, and never forgot that this manly soul triumphed over those two tremendous forces, the Revolution and despotism. All Catholics should imitate the Brothers in this, and never forget such men.

And now arose for the first time the great question of military service. It was at this juncture that the Brothers realized the advantage of being placed under the protection of the University. They had hitherto only escaped conscription through the kindness

of the Emperor, and this indulgence would undoubtedly have ceased in presence of the terrible demands of the last wars of the Empire, which mowed down the flower of French youth. But, in 1811, Fontanes obtained an order from the Council of State, according to which " professors, school-masters and Brothers of the Christian schools, who had reached the age for service, might, on the demand of the Grand Master of the University and the presentation of the Minister, enjoy the provisional exemption for the service which was granted to the Normal School. "

The Empire fell, and peace was re-established. It would be difficult to describe the anguish that oppressed the soul of the new Superior during those awful years 1814 and 1815. It is no business of ours to judge the divers governments that have succeeded each other in France since then; but we are certainly expressing a truism when we assert that in 1815 France had need of peace. Then began those thirty magnificent years from 1815 to 1845, during which France gave to Europe the spectacle of a progressive movement in science, literature and art, of which she is justly proud. Master-pieces called out master-pieces. There were poets whose names were Lamartine and Victor Hugo; historians called Chateaubriand and Guizot; painters called Géricault and Ingres; a score of great orators in the tribune, and great writers in every department. The schools felt the effect of this universal movement, and the Restoration was for them an epoch of regeneration and splendor.

There still remained pending the question of the relations of the Institute with the University, formerly Imperial, now Royal.

During the first Restoration, the monopoly of the University had seemed excessive, and it was very wisely considered that the "*regime* of one sole and absolute authority was incompatible with the liberal intentions of the government. " Consequently, on the 15th February 1815, seventeen universities were instituted. However, this attempt at decentralisation did not last long. The Hundred Days brought back the old state of things, and the second Restoration maintained provisionally the Imperial University, me-

rely substituting, in place of the Grand Master, a Committee of Public Instruction. It was a distinction without a difference.

The first thing this Committee did was to draw up a set of rules for primary education. The supervision of the schools and the appointment of masters were confided to Cantonal Committees composed of the parish-priest of the canton, the president, the justice of the peace and a few notables named by the Rector of the Academy. A distinction was made between different categories of these establishments; there were the public or communal schools, the charity-schools, the private or free schools, and the *Christian schools*, to whom were applied laws of obvious import :—

Every religious or charitable Association, such as the Christian schools, may be allowed to furnish, on certain conditions, masters to the Communes which may ask for them, provided the said Association be approved by us, and that its rules and method have been approved by our Committee of Public Instruction.

These Associations, and especially their novitiates, may be supported either by the district where it is found necessary to establish them, or by the budget of Public Instruction.

The schools provided with masters by this sort of Associations will remain subject, like the others, to the supervision of the authorities constituted by the present decree ¹.

We see here how carefully the Committee reserved to itself the approbation of methods of teaching. A rather vehement opposition had, in fact, just been raised against the system the principles of which Blessed de la Salle had laid down, and whose merits a century's experience had fully proved. We have seen that the life of the holy founder had been an unbroken chain of trials and efforts; his Institute was, apparently, to share the same destiny. There was to be no rest for it in this world.

¹ Articles 36, 37, 38.

A system brought from India by Bell and applied in England by Doctor Lancaster had fascinated many minds by its novelty and by the specious features of its programme.

We all know the prestige that is attached to things that come from afar, and the power of a clever advertisement. It is really

+

Mon révérend frère Supérieur

J'ai présenté votre requête dont on étoit déjà prevenu. Elle est juste : et je n'ai eu aucune peine à le prouver. vous me trouverez dans toutes les circonstances toujours disposé à vous servir, d'autant plus que vous servir, c'est servir la religion. Je vois avec plaisir que dans le Conseil, il n'est jamais question des frères des écoles chrétiennes, sans éloge de leur enseignement et de leur méthode. Je me recommande bien sincèrement à vos prières. vous connaissez les sentiments que je professe pour vous et pour votre Congrégation

Émery

30^{g^{re}} 1810

Letter from abbé Émery to Brother Gerbaud (p. 498) ¹.

difficult to find any other reason for the favor which the "mutual" or Lancastrian method enjoyed for a time, unless, underlying this

¹ Translation :

" Reverend Brother Superior,

" I presented your petition, which was already announced; it is just; and I have had no trouble in proving it. You will always find me under all circumstances disposed to serve you, all the more so because in serving you I serve religion. I am pleased to see that in the Council there is never a mention of the Brothers of the Christian schools without praise of their teaching and their method. I commend myself very sincerely to your prayers. You know the sentiments that I profess for you and your Congregation.

" ÉMERY. "

infatuation of the liberal party, there lurked a secret desire to supplant another method invented by Religious. And this was in truth at the bottom of it. Men of sixty years of age must remember distinctly that the term "mutual schools" bore the same meaning then that the term "secular schools" has to-day.

To instruct children by children, such was the principle of the new theory. The pupils were not to be divided, according to their knowledge, into classes where they received lessons from the lips of the masters, and instruction intended to develop their mind and to form their character. One master sufficed for several hundreds of pupils, and nothing was demanded of him but a general outlook over this juvenile population—no moral direction, no salutary influence of wisdom and experience; there was an end of all that.

The new mechanism worked in this way:—At a given hour, little squadrons ranged themselves round monitors chosen from amongst the most advanced of the children, and to these young pedagogues was handed over the business of imparting such elements of knowledge as they had themselves imbibed. They were to make the children spell out letters written on the black board, and exercise their inexperienced fingers in forming letters on slates. All this went on in one class-room, amidst indescribable hubbub, accompanied by a silly parody of military exercises.

If we were to believe the admirers of this system, imported into France by Carnot during the Hundred Days, its advantages were manifold. It reduced the number of masters, and thereby made a notable economy for the budget; it suppressed the troublesome side of study for the children, and appealed solely to emulation to encourage work; everything, in fact, spoke in favor of the foreign system. Immediately the authorities made haste to adopt it. The old French method, born of Blessed de la Salle's long experience and the patient observation of his disciples, was thrown aside. They were no longer wanted, these devoted teachers whose competence had been so tried and proved, and who had given

themselves up completely to studying and practising the question of school-teaching for more than a century. The novelty of the hour had dismissed them summarily. And the Institute was on the eve of a crisis that might prove fatal. The Brothers had been accused of being too strongly attached to their traditions, of being obstinate and unmanageable. Now, their system is UNIVERSALLY ADOPTED, and pedagogues are all agreed in declaring that they were right in clinging to the principles laid down by their holy founder. But, as we see, it was not without trouble they won this triumph, and it may not be out of place to recall here the battle the Institute had to fight in defence of true doctrine.

A vital question was at stake in the matter of elementary teaching. We do not allude to the external side of the programme. Whether the pupil learns from a board or a book, whether he writes on paper or on a slate, matters very little; as to one of the children teaching his companions, in certain cases it may be very useful, and the system had even been adopted long before by Blessed de la Salle. The essential point, which had been deliberately rejected by the mutual school, and which the Brothers have the merit of having stoutly upheld, is the preponderating part played by the teacher towards the pupils; the respectful intimacy in which these two ought to live, and the direct and constant intercourse that should be kept up between them. In other words, there ought not to be thrust between the master and the child an inexperienced intermediary who at best can only give forth a feeble echo of the master's voice and the lessons received from him.

There is no use in asserting the contrary— study can never be turned into play, and the child will learn nothing unless he gives himself up to real work, unless he be sustained by the patient and skilful hand of a real master. Moreover, any education worthy of the name should aim at something higher than teaching the first elements of knowledge. It is bound to inform the child of his principal duties, and to teach him to practise them. In order to attain this end, the lessons and the example of a master are ne-

cessary, a master who himself cultivates the rare virtues of gentleness, prudence, wisdom, humility, and so many others which Blessed de la Salle considered necessary to masters. It was push-



E. GARNIER DEL.

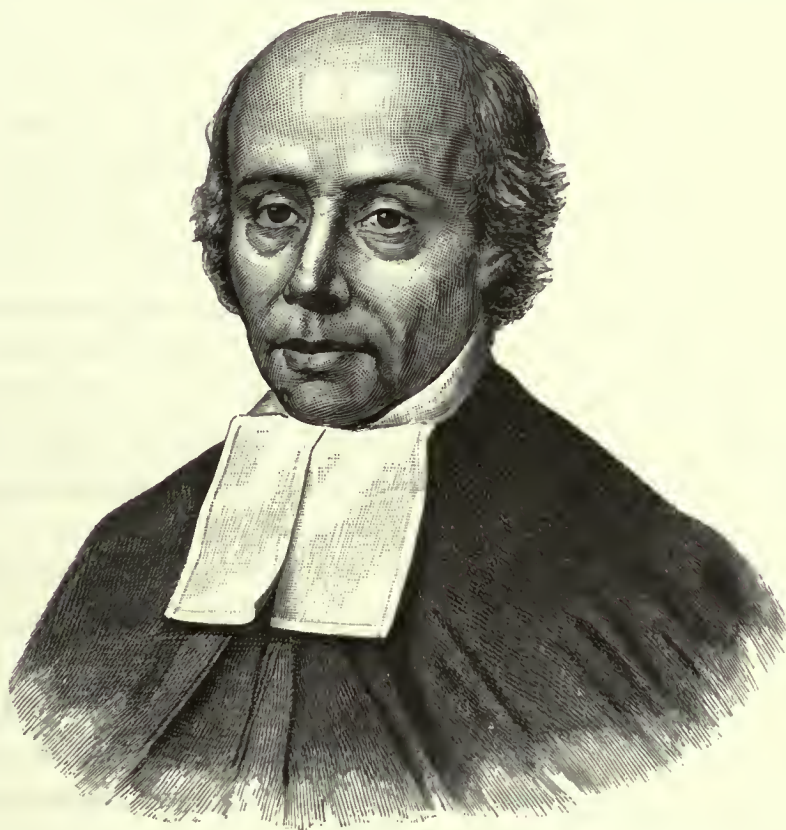
A. NAPIER.

Monsieur de Boulogne, Bishop of Troyes († 1825), devoted friend and indefatigable defender of the Institute.
— Drawn by Édouard Garnier, from a portrait belonging to the family of the Bishop; engraved by Napier.

ing the absurd too far to assign such a mission as this to children of twelve years old.

The partisans of the Lancastrian schools omitted nothing to secure the triumph of their system. They founded a society for

the propagation of their views; they did not shrink from the weapon of caricature, and spread abroad treacherous pictures which represented the children flying enthusiastically to the mutual school, and jeering contemptuously at the Brothers'. They appealed above all very practically to the government, which



Brother Gerband, sixth Superior general born at Brehéville, diocese of Verdun, December 21th 1760; entered the Institute May 1st 1778; elected Superior general, September 8th 1810; died in Paris, August 10th 1822; Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Mouilleron.

patronized the Lancastrian system and opened a state credit to it.

This official pressure was not superfluous, for the mutual method met with small favor from the municipal councils.

The numerous foundations of schools of the Christian Brothers which date from this period¹ are an eloquent proof that

¹ In the cities of Cambrai, Beauvais, Auch, Nantes, Metz, Rennes, Clermont-Ferrand, Belley, Limoges, Dijon, Montargis, Nîmes, Vannes, Albi, Saint-Brieuc, Châlon-sur-Saône, Poitiers, le Puy, la Rochelle.

the populations preferred the masters whose long experience and devotedness had secured the confidence of the country, to the adventurers who had only a new fangled theory to commend them.

The Government did not take into account this movement of public opinion, and continued obstinately to support the new system. Pecuniary help, sites for schools, every sort of favor was showered on the Lancastrians. The King himself "approves of the perfected methods of elementary teaching, and requests the Prefects to protect the new schools." The mutualists, hereupon, are carried away by an enthusiasm that seems somewhat exaggerated. "Thanks be rendered," they exclaim, "to the far-seeing and enlightened minister who, recognizing the right that all the French people have to the benefits of primary education, welcomes, honors and supports the one means of spreading abroad this precious benefit, from the most populous towns to the most remote hamlets in the kingdom!" A touching tribute of gratitude undoubtedly.

M. Lainé, to whom it was addressed, felt that the success of his favorite schools would be compromised if they came into open competition with those of the Brothers. He, therefore, thought it best to gain over the latter to his views, and the Prefect of Lyons was ordered to submit the *Practical Manual* of the mutual schools to the Superior general, and request him to have it adopted by his Religious.

We can imagine what answer Brother Gerbaud made to this. His letter is a testimony to the lofty idea which the Brothers had of their mission as teachers, and the energy they displayed in defence of the true interests of the schools :—

The report which we made in your name to the general Assembly, as well as your honorable letter of the 17th, and the proposed rules of the school were read and received with respect.

The said Assembly recognized unanimously that this plan is incompatible with our Rule, for we have the happiness to be Religious under constitutions approved by the Holy See and patented by the King.

Here is an extract from these Rules which are our happiness, our joy, our crown, and our sole consolation in the painful toil of our humble condition.

If it were only a question of changing the denomination of letters, or any other accidental part of our teaching, without touching the foundation, we should be willing to accept it for a greater gain.

You must know that we have embraced this humble and laborious profession solely with a view to God and eternal salvation, for ourselves and that of our neighbour. This is why we are teaching. We are not actuated by interest or by ambition : the glory of God, of religion and morals, this is what we seek. To this tend all our teaching. If we teach reading, writing, arithmetic, it is to draw children to the sacred truths of Religion, this is our chief, our supreme aim. All the rest apart from this counts for nothing. Now, in the plan proposed, not alone we do not see religion predominant, but we perceive a direct opposition to our principles and a total subversion of our Rules, without which we must cease to be an active Religious body.

Far from wanting to enter into competition, we leave the ground clear for those who would dispute it with us; we carry the influence of our holy profession to those who, like the most Christian King, condescend to receive us. However many schools and establishments there may be besides our own, they do not interfere with us, because we have only one object : that is to sanctify ourselves. And so long as we are allowed to strive after this according to our statutes, in peace and concord with all the world, without envy, rivalry, or any pretention, we shall remain as in the past the humblest, most submissive and most devoted servants of the public good, and the most inoffensive of citizens ¹.

It would be difficult to find anything firmer, simpler, loftier than this language. All the Brothers spoke like their Superior. Steps taken individually with the Brothers failed in every case; the loyal resistance of the Institute remained unshaken. The Minister grew irritated at last, and resolved to make them expiate this stiff-necked fidelity to their Rule. Breaking with the immemorial tradition of the University, he exacted from the Brothers the diplomas which the decree of 1816 prescribed for primary teachers. We will not enlarge upon the history of this conflict which led to the closing of several of the schools. At a crisis when the administration was soliciting the Brothers to give up the method adopted by the rules of the Institute, Brother Gerbaud

¹ Letter dated from Lyons, September 30th 1816.

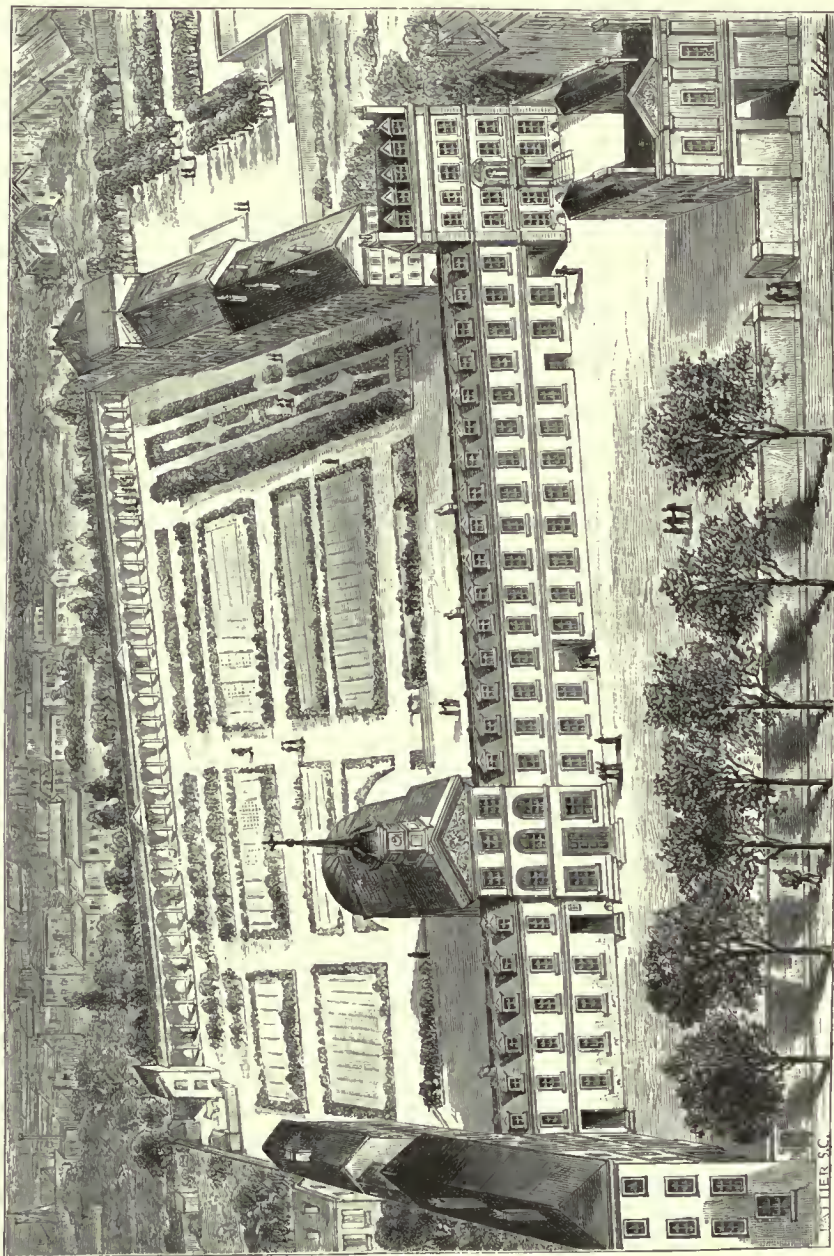
thought it advisable to put forth more saliently the power of his authority, and the efficaciousness of his direction. It was not the moment to weaken the bounds that united the head of the Institute to its members. An arrangement approved by the King rescued them at last and secured the rights of the Superior general. It was agreed that the Brothers should have diplomas; but that they should be delivered to them on their presenting their letter of obedience. This was in February 1819.

These were not the only sources of anxiety in reserve for Brother Gerbaud. Scarcely had the Lancastrian crisis come to an end, when a still more vital question was raised. The great debate on the new military law was opened in 1818, and the first point attacked was the fate of the Brothers concerning the conscription. One party in the chamber objected to their being exempted from the service; but the assembly eventually adopted the proposition of Royer-Collard who assimilated the Brothers to the pupils of the Normal schools, and dispensed them from military duty in their quality of "persons devoted to the public service."

Thus, twice in three years, Providence had saved the Institute; first, rescuing it from the mutual system, and then from the military service which would have interfered with a recruitment so useful to the whole country, as well as to the salvation of souls.

A new task had devolved on Brother Gerbaud— this was to make Paris the centre of the Institute. It is evident that out of Paris there can be no centre for an Institute like that of the Brothers, which, for one reason or another, requires continually to be in relation with the government. Important business must be transacted personally; letters cause too much delay. In Paris, also, the bishops of France are to be met, and likewise the bishops

of other nations; it is here consequently that the Brothers find facilities for discussing with the prelates of Christendom the



House of the faubourg Saint Martin, occupied in 1821 by the Brothers of the Christian schools. — Drawn by Sellier, from a drawing belonging to the Brothers; engraved by Pottier.

grave question of the foundation of Christian schools in their dioceses. Paris, next to Rome, glories in being the noblest centre of Catholic life.

In order to establish the principal seat of the Institute in Paris, a vast building was necessary, and Brother Gerbaud cast his eyes on a house formerly inhabited by Doctor Dubois, in the Faubourg Saint Martin. The municipality adopted this proposal, and the Council general of the Seine supported it before the Minister of the Interior; but just as everything seemed satisfactorily terminated, it all fell through, owing to the unfortunate question of the mutual system. The minister said that any new concessions to the Brothers could only be granted in reward for their docility in accepting the new methods; and then followed fresh discussions between the Minister and Brother Gerbaud regarding individual diplomas. In fact, the whole affair came to a stand still, and was only resumed when the difficulty was solved by royal interference. Eight days had scarcely elapsed after this, when the Duke Decaze authorized the Prefect of the Seine to place the Dubois house at the disposal of Brother Gerbaud. Unfortunately the latter had not sufficient ready money to defray the expenses of moving to the new abode. The Minister flatly refused to allow any subvention¹, and it was not until 1821 that the Régime was able to be transferred to Paris, never again to leave it.

At the same time that the Institute was being definitely settled in Paris, it was busy spreading its houses through the cities and towns of France. Five and twenty foundations of schools during the year 1819, and sixteen in 1820 attest its onward march.

But Brother Gerbaud was not long to survive these constant struggles so valiantly supported. He was taken away from the Brotherhood on the 10th of August 1822. The last days of his old age were cheered by the spectacle of the flourishing condition of his Order: He had powerfully contributed to its prosperity. He had, as we have seen, preserved it from the new methods; he had secured its fertility by rescuing it from the rigors of the

¹ In 1822, the government decided on coming to the assistance of an establishment that trained masters who rendered such services to the youth of France, and a sum of 6,300 francs was granted by the Minister of Interior "to help in the repairs to be made in the central House of the Brothers."

conscription; he restored it to Paris, its true and normal centre. Such were the three achievements, the three glories of his generalship. He was succeeded by Brother William of Jesus.

Brother William of Jesus had been fifty years a member of the Institute. In 1810 the Superior general said of him :— “ No one could be humbler, gentler, wiser, more prudent, more submissive than he, more worthy, in fact, to fill the first place. ” He came to fill it on Brother Gerbaud’s death.

His generalship lasted eight years, and they were years of tranquillity and hope. Few Superiors had a calmer period to pass through. And yet the same obstacles and perils were always to be feared and guarded against. The conflict with the mutual system lost nothing of its first bitterness, and the Brothers were called upon to show the same indomitable firmness under Brother William which they had displayed under Brother Gerbaud.

Two great events mark the new superiorship. One was the creation of a Normal school of Masters by the Brothers. In this school, founded at Rouen, the Brothers undertook to train secular masters, and this service the government imitated later on. But there was something more important even than this. The spiritual sons of Blessed de la Salle resolved to found boarding-schools for professional and commercial studies. This had been one of the ideas of their founder, it was a line that he had marked out for his disciples, and we may remember that in the eighteenth century they had already carried out the idea very successfully.

The Brothers anticipated the majority of the so called inventions of modern pedagogy; we have proved this more than once, and the fact must strike the most prejudiced judges.

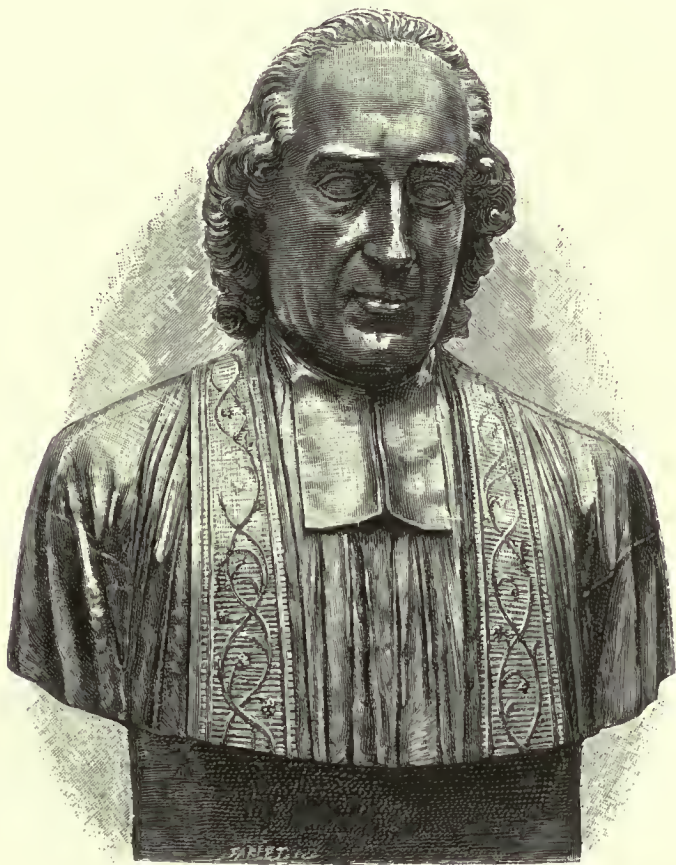
Thus it was that, thanks to the generosity of Abbé Martin, pastor of Saint Aphrodise, at Béziers, the famous boarding-school was founded in that town. Two Brothers had opened a school there towards the end of November 1820; but it was not until 1828 that Brother William was able to take the necessary steps



Brother William of Jesus, seventh Superior general, born at Carcassonne, February 7th 1748; entered the Institute June 16th 1763; elected Superior general November 11th 1822; died in Paris June 16th 1830. Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing by Moullieron.

for founding the boarding-school. He began by asking permission to receive the legacy of Abbé Martin, who had died before the realization of his pious purpose. The authorization was not given until August 24th 1819, when a Royal decree was granted conformably to the advice of the Council of State. Brother William of Jesus had, therefore, the joy of seeing this important foundation receive the official consecration he had solicited for it. He

died on the 10th of June 1830, a few months after the signing of this authorization; but he had enjoyed the pure and modest glory of its initiative, and had deserved well of the Institute.



Abbé Martin, parish-priest of Saint Aphrodise at Béziers. — Engraved by Farlet, from a bust of David d'Angers.

His successor was Brother Anaclet. The government of the Institute devolved upon the new Superior at a very critical juncture. The triumph of the liberal party had roused all the dormant revolutionary passions. People do not, in general, form an adequate idea of what these years 1831 and 1832 were : they were a period of anxiety and upheaving. The executive was not strong

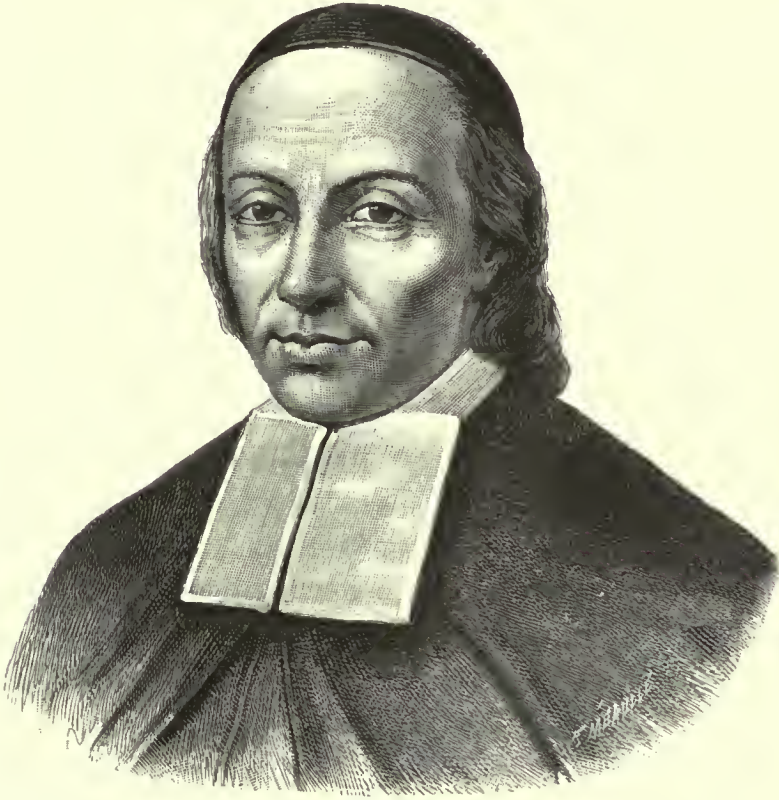
enough to suppress these insurrections that were constantly putting the country in danger. The pillage of the Archbishop's palace proved this. The Brothers naturally experienced the effect of this movement, which bore everywhere a distinctly anti-religious character. They could not be popular with the people who sang the execrable songs of Beranger. A great number of their schools were deprived of their grants, and eleven of them had to be closed.

A more serious event still was that in 1831 a decree deprived the Institute of a privilege to which it attached, very properly, great importance. Notwithstanding their official position of members of a teaching congregation, the Brothers could not henceforth obtain their diploma without passing the examinations exacted from secular teachers. It may be suggested that this decree was rather favorable to the Brothers than otherwise, as they would henceforth owe their success only to themselves, all semblance of prerogative being withdrawn from them. It was perhaps one of these trials which God permits for the advancement of our minds and the salvation of our souls.

The Brothers revenged themselves for all these harassing vexations by extending their benevolent influence in every direction. At this period they founded a work of unspeakable value in the cause of popular education— night-schools for adults. These useful foundations soon attracted the attention of M. Guizot, who offered to second the charitable zeal of the Brothers in this direction.

These night-schools were a great success, and there is not a town in France which has not opened some for the young men of the working classes. In Paris, there must be at least two hundred of them. The Philotechnic association, the Polytechnic association, and a score of others vied with each other in zeal for their propagation, recruiting members, creating prizes, and distributing them. This is so far good, but it would be still better if these classes were not too often schools of scepticism, and if wholesome literature were not altogether driven from the field by a too exclusive study of the physical sciences. But whatever be the imperfec-

tions of the work, its usefulness is incontestable, and we must in justice attribute the initiative to the Brothers. They had the first conception of it, and were the first to start it. M. Guizot, in his loyal impartiality, would have publicly acknowledged this. It is said that he one day put questions to the pupils of the Brothers in



Brother Anaclet, eighth Superior general, born at Sirod, diocese of Saint-Claude, January 8th 1755; entered the Institute on June 30th 1805; elected Superior general on September 2nd 1830; died in Paris September 6th 1838.
— Engraved by Méaulle, from a drawing of Mouilleron.

the History of France, and the immortal author of “The History of Civilization” was very genuinely astonished by the excellent answers of the children. He congratulated them, as he knew how to do, and no praise was ever more fully appreciated or better deserved.

The illustrious minister had greatly at heart all that concerned the education of the people. The law of 1833, the first which dealt with the whole system of elementary education, was his

work. It developed the programmes of that education by instituting the superior diploma along with the elementary diploma. It established in every country one of those normal schools of masters which the Brothers had the honor of inaugurating. It created a competition, or rather an emulation, between the Brothers and the secular masters, that produced excellent results. The Brothers redoubled their efforts to keep the first rank in the universal war which was declared against ignorance. Brother Anaclæt, after consulting the general Chapter called for this purpose in 1834, revised the school books of the Institute, and introduced those improvements which the Congregation never tires of following up in theory as in practice.

The Superior general carried out an idea of Blessed de la Salle's for re-establishing the Preparatory Novitiates of which we have had occasion to speak at the beginning of the history of the Institute. The pupils admitted into these houses are young men who aspire to the admirable career of the Christian Brothers. Their education is finished here, their vocation is carefully examined, and they are by degrees initiated into the religious life. If they persist in their desire to join the congregation, they make excellent recruits; if the trial is not crowned with success, the education they have received has fitted them for some other more congenial calling.

The zeal and virtues of Brother Anaclæt won universal admiration, and M. Guizot, who was a judge of merit, wished to fasten the cross of the Legion of Honor on the breast of that valiant champion of education; but the humility of the Religious shrank from the honor. He aimed at a higher reward, one that God alone could bestow, and a premature death was soon to bring him the crown he coveted. He was only fifty years of age when the Brothers lost him.

It may be well to pause a moment in presence of this early grave, and on the threshold of Brother Philip's long reign, and consider what has been done by the various Superiors to whom the direction of the Institute was successively entrusted. Such retrospects are useful, and sometimes have an eloquence of their own.

Under the Vicariate of Brother Frumence, the scattered Brothers were gradually gathered together, and a centre was created for the Institute at Lyons.

During this same Vicariate, the revived Brotherhood of the Christian schools was blessed with a special blessing by the Sovereign Pontiff. One step more in advance, and the Brothers, recognized by the State, were permitted to resume their religious costume. They were but few in number, and needed recruits. An appeal to the dispersed Brothers soon refilled their houses. The Brothers were incorporated with the Imperial University, and found in this dependance, which seemed fraught with danger to them, certain guarantees for their present existence, and their approaching prosperity.

To Brother Frumence, Vicar general, succeeded Brother Gerbaud, a Superior general who continued manfully the tradition of his predecessors before the Revolution. The struggle against the mutual schools fills a portion of his life— a hard struggle, a struggle for life and death, from which he emerges victorious. Then, with the question of military service come new battles and fresh victories. Finally, he accomplishes the return of the Institute to Paris, its ancient centre, and its essential one. Such was the work of Brother Gerbaud, and it is hard to conceive a finer one.

With his successor, Brother William of Jesus, comes the foundation of the normal school at Rouen and the creation at Béziers of a boarding-school copied on those of the eighteenth century, and which is to serve as a model for scores of others.

some bold and practical pedagogical innovation. And yet, for all its vitality, new dangers threaten it. The Revolution never disarms, and heavy clouds are gathering on the horizon.

It was under this lowering sky that Brother Philip received the burden of superiority from the Institute.





The Brothers on the ramparts : Paris, 1870-1871 (p. 536 and following). — Drawn by M. de Bellée ; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER V.

BROTHER PHILIP.



BROTHER Philip, the living and complete representative of the Institute in our age, was born on the 1st of November 1792, a few months after the martyrdom of the two first Brothers who fell victims to their fidelity to the Church—*Sanguis martyrurum, semen Christianorum*. He came of a line of mountaineers, and had inherited all the qualities of that austere and vigorous race. His parents

were humble laborers of the hamlet of Gachat, in the commune of Apinac, in the province of the Loire. They lived in a poor little house perched on a height of some two thousand yards.

Christians of the old block, they had remained staunchly attached to their faith, and sheltered the priests who had refused to take the civil oath. When any one on the mountain was dying and wanted the last sacraments, the priest knew where to look for a guide, and if needs be a defender; Peter Bransiet was always to the fore. Mathew Bransiet grew up amidst scenes that recalled the lives of the early Christians. He could realize what the catacombs were.

Before he was seventeen, he who was one day to be Brother Philip felt himself irresistibly drawn to the Institute of Blessed de la Salle. The priesthood alarmed his humility, he only considered himself fit to wear the coarse habit of the Brothers. In 1809, he entered the Novitiate of Lyons, under the direction of Brother Emery, whose sanctity shone out over him. Then God brought him in contact for a time with Brother Gerbaud, who was directing with such energy and wisdom the school at Gros-Caillou. Brother Gerbaud was a master mind, and he left his stamp on the young Brother of whom it was already being prophesied :— He will be Superior of the Institute one day. ” Brother Philip did not remain long in Paris; his superiors thought fit to employ elsewhere his fine intellect and ardent zeal. As he was a good mathematician, they sent him to profess mathematics at the coasting school of Auray, where he passed many happy days not far from the sanctuary of St Anne. He was so precociously ripe for the direction of souls, that they all surnamed him the “ young old man. ” He was successively Director at Rethel, at Rheims, in the Community of Saint Nicolas-des-Champs in Paris, everywhere upholding the traditions of the Institute, fighting against the Lancastrian schools, forming excellent pupils, writing his first books, notably his *Practical Geometry applied to Linear Drawing*, and already appointed to the Inspection of all the “ Congregational ” schools in Paris. When, after the Revolution of 1830, the general Chapter elected Brother Anaclet superior, Brother Philip, then eight and thirty years of age, was named one of his four Assistants.





Finally, on the 20th of November 1838, the votes of the Brothers confided to him the supreme government, which he exercised for thirty-six years, a longer reign than any of his predecessors had had since Blessed de la Salle. The only persons who did not rejoice at this election were the young novices, in whom Brother Philip had taken a paternal interest, and to whom he had devoted whatever moments he could spare from his manifold duties as Assistant.

The eminent persons who, in their intercourse with Brother Philip, so often had occasion to appeal to his wisdom and experience, always admired his rare intelligence, his lofty views, and his genius for administration. "There is the making of a minister in that man," was the judgment of a statesman. And yet these brilliant qualities which dazzled all who approached him were but the external reflection of his beautiful soul. To understand what its interior beauty was, it would be necessary to interrogate the Religious who shared his life, who had every day under their eyes the proofs of his spirit of faith, his charity, his love of the Rule, his love of work, his humility, his piety; it would be necessary to collect his circulars on fidelity to the Rules of the congregation, on holiness, on union amongst the Brothers, on their mission to the young. Such a direction, exercised throughout a long term of years, was calculated to develop powerfully the progress of the Institute.

Under Brother Philip, those fertile institutions, the boarding-schools, spread considerably. What, during the last three centuries, the Jesuits did for the children of the nobility and the higher middle classes, the Brothers have done for the lower middle classes, and especially for those innumerable children whose families intend them to embrace commerce, agriculture and trade. I repeat it, we do not half realize the advantages France owns to the powerful initiative of Blessed de la Salle and his spiritual sons. The law of 1833, inspired by the example of the Brothers, developed the programmes of primary education, and the Institute took advantage of it to found numerous houses similar to those which

France : 726 Communities in 83 Departments.

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THE INSTITUTE
of the
Brothers of the Christian schools.
Communities established
during the administration of
BROTHER PHILIP
from November 21st 1838
to January 7th 1871.

Ireland	720	Czechoslovakia	16
France Lorraine	8	India	14
Mexico	1	Algeria	14
Belgium	38	Taiwan	2
Switzerland	1	Algeria	17
Italy	37	Madagascar	2
Prussia	4	Myanmar	5
England	6	Seychelles	1
Austria	1	Zimbabwe	3
Romania	1	Canada	28
Turkey to Europe	1	United States	70
Turkey to Asia	4	Ecuador	1
Europe	832	Africa	43
Asia	261	America	101
Total : 1092 Communities.			

The squares show the number of houses in the same place.

Paris . 29 Communities.

Communities situated outside of this map

[illegible]

had been so prosperous before the Revolution. Thanks to Brother



Notre Dame of France. — Statue of Bonnavie, at Puy-en-Velay. — This statue was cast with cannons taken at Sebastopol, and the pedestal was raised by a subscription of five centimes¹ by all the pupils of the Brothers. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Napier.

Philip's zeal there soon arose the fine boarding-schools of Tou-

¹ One cent.

louse, of Lyons, Saint Etienne, Nantes, Dijon, Bayonne, and finally Beauvais, to which latter was added a model farm, an other and very happy innovation.

The care of prisoners fills a high place amongst the admirable acts of charity known as works of mercy, and which have been laid down by Christ Himself. The prisoner's body is often sick and worn out, but it is his mind that suffers most, and it needs a tender hand to dress the wounds of these poor souls, as well as a prudent one to introduce light and life into these darkened consciences. It had not seemed to Blessed de la Salle that bringing back wandering souls to virtue was a mission incompatible with the training of innocent children. It was this conviction that led him to accept the incorrigible youths kept in confinement at Saint Yon. Brother Philip made it a point of honor to revive this part of the holy founder's work; and if the apostolate of the Brothers in the prisons did not last long, it was owing to the disturbances which convulsed France at the period of the revolution of 1848. The Brothers had first exercised this mission of mercy in the prisons of Nimes in 1844, and their salutary influence was soon manifested there. "I cannot forget," wrote the Minister of the Interior, "that, when the Brothers were called to the Central House at Nimes, that establishment was in the most deplorable state as regarded sanitary conditions, and I am convinced that the marked improvement in the health of the convicts is to be attributed in a great measure to the close supervision of the Brothers, to their spirit of justice and the moral influence they exercised on the condemned by the example of their self-devotion, their wise advices and pious exhortations."

The prisons of Fontevrault, Melun and Amiens were then opened to them, and during seven years they gave themselves up to the care of the prisoners without thinking of the dangers that might overtake them. These dangers were, nevertheless, far from being imaginary, as was proved by the assassination of Brother Pascal in 1845 at Nimes. The excitement produced in the prisons by the popular agitations of 1848 forced Brother Philip to with-

draw his Religious from that service of mercy, and devote them wholly to education. Here they were on ground that no one could dispute with them. Ever since the decree of April 18th 1831, they were obliged to go up for public examinations, just like other aspirants, before the Commissions established in the chief town of the province. They fell under the common laws.

Brother Philip soon had an opportunity of proving the rare proficiency he had acquired in pedagogical matters. When the law of 1850 was in course of preparation, he was called to form part of the extra-parliamentary commission that was charged with drawing up the plan of the new organization. His colleagues received with respect the lessons of his experience. This law of March 15th 1850 is undoubtedly one of the most important of our age, and it had very happy results. The text voted by the National Assembly bore the stamp of genuine liberalism. While remaining subject to the diploma of capacity, the Brothers had full liberty as to the choice of methods, and were dispensed from the military service on condition of "engaging themselves for ten years in the service of education."

Unfortunately, the execution of laws is not always in harmony with the spirit that dictates them, and the Brothers had soon to undergo new and severe trials. First, the authorities wanted to force them to exact payment from their pupils; but this was in direct contradiction with the fundamental principle of gratuity laid down by Blessed de la Salle for the schools he had founded. The Minister of Public Instruction refused, however, to abate one iota of his demands; he shut up several schools, and threatened to extend the same measure to all of them. On the 10th of June 1861, he wrote to the Superior general that "if this resistance continued, the government would be obliged to withdraw its protection from the Brothers of the Christian schools."

Brother Philip hesitated a long time. He felt he would not be justified in compromising the fate of the schools in order to preserve in its integrity the Rule which had been hitherto followed in the Institute. After having taken the advice of the general

Chapter and referred the matter to the Holy See, he yielded, and declared himself willing to submit to the exactions of the government; but only for so long as the circumstances which imposed them upon him should last. The system he had accepted placed the Congregation altogether outside of all retribution from the schools. The Brothers went on teaching the children without accepting anything from them, and let the municipal councils levy what they thought fit as payment from the families.

After having opposed the gratuitous teaching of the Brothers, the government endeavored to limit its extension. The Director of the boarding-school at Dijon was first attacked in 1862 because the programme of the studies included certain branches "which had not figured in the law of 1850." But here the Minister of Public Instruction showed more wisdom, and gave up a system of petty vexations which was unworthy both of the government and of the Institute. M. Durny saw that the best thing he could do would be to follow the lead of the Brothers, and borrow from them what was best in their views, their progress and their models. The system of studies established at the boarding-school of Passy was the model on which the law of June 21st 1865 framed the special secondary education. But a few months after he had paid this tribute to the Brothers, the same Minister drew up a circular which seriously compromised their recruitment by subjecting to military service the Religious who taught in the free parochial schools.

The law of 1850 had exempted from the service those members of religious associations who contracted an engagement of devoting themselves for ten years to public education. This law, which was a law of liberty, could not make a distinction here between private schools and communal schools. The first interpretations of the law proved it amply. M. Rouland, who was not to be suspected of partiality towards the Brothers, had recognized that the "Brother charged with the direction of a free school belonging to the Association does not lose his right to the exemption."

M. Duruy changed all this, and in his circular of the 14th of February 1866, declared that, in order to profit by the dispensation from military service, it was necessary to devote oneself to public education *in an establishment of public education*.



Gregory XVI., from a contemporary portrait. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Huyot.

This new theory was warmly attacked, and the question was carried up to the Senate. The speech made by M^r de Bonnechose, Archbishop of Rouen, showed up the illegality of the ministerial circular, which pretended to modify the terms of the engagement regulated by the law; but his eloquence failed to alter a foregone conclusion, and the Senate confirmed the ministerial decree. Next

year, the law regarding the National Guard gave Brother Philip fresh cause for anxiety. He worked energetically for the threatened Institute, and succeeded in getting a clause inserted in the law of February 1868 which saved the interests of the Brothers.

In works that are blessed by God, trials are only an encouragement from above to the workmen. Their zeal does not flag under the difficulties of the task. Not satisfied with sending forth Brothers to every point in France, Brother Philip was spreading them broadcast over Europe. In London, the Brothers have won for themselves recognition as educators. In Vienna, they have the direction of the grand Imperial and Royal Orphanage. At Turin, over three thousand five hundred children crowd to their schools. They are to be met in Switzerland, England, Prussia and Austria. Belgium, which received them in 1814, continues to draw upon their self devotion, and confides to them primary schools, and schools for adults, boarding-schools and normal schools. The ancient castle of the Dukes of Bouillon, at Carlsbourg, is in 1844 placed at their disposal, and they establish there a normal school and a boarding-school destined to train pupils for the government schools.

In Ireland, a teaching congregation, founded by M. Edmund Rice in 1804 under the name of Christian Brothers, has been governed by statutes borrowed from the Rule of Blessed de la Salle. Before adopting these statutes three of their members passed some time at the Mother House, then in Rue Faubourg Saint-Martin, in order to familiarize themselves with the mode of life and the methods of teaching practiced by the older Congregation, and ever since the two families entertain for each other mutual affection and respect.

The Brothers cross the seas, and carry the method of the humble Canon of Rheims to all parts of the universe. These pioneers of civilization, as a traveller has called them, are working for the regeneration of the East, teaching the lessons of the Gospel to the children of those ancient Christendoms of Africa and Asia Minor, our elders in the faith.

In Algiers, they are one of the most efficacious elements of civilization. The Brothers landed there in December 1853, and soon spread from Algiers to Oran, to Blidah, to Tlemcen, to Constantine, to Milianah, to Mostaganem and Stora. In Tunis, they are encouraged by the Bey, and many hundreds of children knock every morning at the door of the Christian schools. In Alexandria and Cairo they have free schools for catholic children, and boarding-schools open to Mussulmans and schismatics. In Constantinople, right in the heart of Islamism, they have one of their largest boarding-schools, that of Kadi-Kcuï, and three groups of schools at Pera, Galata, and Saint Esprit. Nor does their march eastward stop here; at the conquest of Cochinchina, they were called to the new colony, and settled at Saïgon and at Mytho in 1866, at Vinh-Longh in 1869.

This was not the first time that they carried Christian education to such distant shores. In 1816 they had already gained a footing in the island of Reunion. But it was above all under the generalship of Brother Philip that their influence developed in that island, where eighty-four Brothers are at this present day working for the regeneration of the blacks by means of primary schools and classes for adults.

Their mission was no less fruitful at Madagascar where they served as useful auxiliaries to the Jesuits of Tananarive, and were extremely popular with the natives. The sad events which of late years have disturbed the unfortunate country have dispersed the little Christian settlement; but Brother Raphaël, a native of Madagascar, was able to remain in his country, and continue as far as he could the admirable work of our missionaries.

But it is chiefly on the vast American continent that the Institute, transplanted from France, has developed most prosperously. The first soil which received this Christian seed was in fact a second France, for as such is Canada known. On the 22nd of January 1838, a school was opened at Montreal, where it soon won general favor. In two years, it counted five and twenty Brothers, and eighteen hundred pupils. Other centres of education

were founded at Quebec and Three-Rivers, and then the Brothers, spreading their ramifications beyond Canada, invaded, so to speak, the United States, where their growth was rapid and extensive. They soon established themselves in Baltimore and New York, and covered the free soil of America with Catholic schools. In a word, their houses in North America were so numerous in 1863 that Brother Philip was obliged to divide these new conquests into two provinces, one in Canada and one in the United States. Each of these two had henceforth its own Novitiate, and the future seemed secured.

This conquest was achieved by a man having in him the stuff that makes great heroes and great Saints. Born to rule, large of heart and broad of mind, a man inspired by the zeal of the Apostles, indefatigable in his exertions, traversing the New World from the Saint Lawrence to the gulf of Mexico, wherever he went he won respect and esteem for the Brothers' habit. He established a numerous family which was his glory and his consolation to the day of his death—a family that loved him as a father and that still cherishes his memory with filial affection and veneration. That man was Brother Facile. His bones now rest in honor among the children of his heart. He left behind him in Canada and the United States in 1861, sixty-eight schools, two-hundred and fifty-nine classes, twenty-four thousand five hundred pupils, three hundred and sixty-eight Brothers and seventy-four novices. Brother Facile has assuredly deserved well of the Church.

The needs of souls vary with countries, and an institution which extends over the whole world must necessarily have a certain elasticity in its mechanism and organization. In America priests were few and greatly wanted; it was essential, therefore, that the programme of education given by the Christian schools should bend itself to the cultivation of ecclesiastical vocations, and the Brothers had to make certain modifications in their method. Hence it is that the Brothers in the United States conduct a certain number of schools imparting a secondary and higher education. There was another class of children in America who





required altogether different training. Beside the primary schools, the Brothers had to open work-shops for a multitude of poor little outcasts who were brought up by sectarians in hatred of the Catholic religion, and whom the Archbishop of New York resolved to save by appealing to the charity of the Brothers. In this way began the famous Protectory of New York, an immense refuge for forsaken Catholic children, and which, like Saint Nicolas of Paris, includes both school and work-shop. In less than ten years, from 1863 to 1872, six thousand children were taken in here and nearly a million and a half dollars expended.

It is impossible to pass over unmentioned that little republic of Equador that is so proud of possessing Christian schools, and that city of Quito where Brother Albanus died, a martyr to his zeal. When it was announced to him that he was going to die, he exclaimed, " Since I have been in Equador, I have always received Communion as in Viaticum in order to prepare myself to die. " Death has no terrors for such a man.

This rapid glance at Brother Philip's work can give no adequate idea of his wonderful activity. We may say of this elect soul that he considered it his duty to continue all the undertakings of Blessed de la Salle in the spirit of their founder. And there is perhaps nothing more difficult than to preserve the primitive spirit of an institution while accommodating it to the requirements of another age.

Brother Philip possessed this rare power. The primary schools, the schools for adults, the boarding schools, the professional schools, the preparatory novitiates, he contrived to preserve them in all their original spirit and original features, and there are few orders in the Church which have undergone so few changes as the Institute of the Brotherhood. All these works are, nevertheless, essentially modern; they are of the nineteenth century; but we have given but a cursory sketch of them; to realize their extent and value, we should quote nearly all Poujoulat's admirable book on this great soul. We have borrowed traits

from it; but the whole should be read by those who wish to know Brother Philip¹.

The history of these foundations has brought us down to that fatal year, 1870, and we have now to relate what befell the Institute during the Franco-German war.

A few words of preface may not be out of place.

The Brothers believe that during these evil days they did their duty; their duty, and nothing more. If you venture to compliment them on their manly and courageous conduct, they reply with sincerity and modesty: "Every body in France behaved well, and we did like every body." They will add, if you try to draw them out on the subject, that they are above all the instructors of the children of the poor, that this is their first duty, and that their devotedness in 1870 was happily an exceptional fact in their lives, as in that of the Institute. We will let them return to their labor of love in the schools, and continue our narrative.

When the thunderbolt fell upon France in 1870, she sent forth a supreme appeal to the self-devotion of all her sons. The Brothers of the Christian schools were not deaf to this cry. After having taught thousands of children how to live worthily, they were now going out to the field of battle and the ambulances to teach them how to die nobly. At the beginning of the war, Brother Philip offered all his houses to receive the wounded, and answered for the zeal of his Brothers. This was a new mission for them; but they did not hesitate, and during long months they remained faithful to duties for which they had volunteered without preparation. Wherever the scourge of war passes, they are to be seen at the side of the wounded, and, after spending their days hard at work in the schools, they pass their nights in helping the dying.

¹ *Vie du Frère Philippe*, par M. Poujoulat. Tours, Mame, 1880.

It was in the East of France that the devotion of the Brothers found its first theatre. The houses of the Institute at Mézières, Etain, Rheims, Châlons, Rethel, and Donchery, were from the month of August filled with the wounded. Then, according as the rising tide advances, they multiply asylums where their charity finds abundant work. The school of Mer, in the county of Loir-et-Cher, receives the wounded who fell before Orleans, and Brother Abercien-Joseph, stricken with disease, dies the victim of his self-imposed devotion. The ambulances of Chartres were, from the 10th of December to the 27th of February, served by the Brothers. At Bapaume, they were to be seen bending over the wounded soldiers of Faidherbe's army. At Coulmiers, at Alençon, at Dreux, at Dijon, at Pontarlier, they went about the battle fields in search of the poor soldiers that were riddled by Prussian bullets. Obeying only the inspiration of charity, they braved the perils of the battle without being sustained by the fever that burns in the combatants. This was their reply to the cowardly charges brought against them by certain penny-a-line pamphleteers.

Nor was it only on the theatre of war that the patriotic devotion of the Brothers manifested itself. All the cities were eager to help those poor sons of France who were suffering for her, and they found in the Brothers ready and valuable auxiliaries. At Lyons, Toulouse, Marseilles, Nantes, Nîmes, Cherbourg, Saint Malo, Cambrai, Montluçon, Marlioz, they are to be found in hastily mounted but well organized ambulances, receiving the wounded, dressing loathesome wounds, and consoling the agonies of the dying. At Besançon and at Clamecy, they nursed the sick stricken with small-pox and typhoid fever, and braved this new danger to which Brother Benonien fell a victim at Rethel, and Brother Honorius a martyr at Clamecy.

Who can tell how many wounded men owed their lives to the intelligent care of the Brothers, and to that affectionate watchfulness by which so many poor sufferers were surrounded? Who can tell, above all, how many of the dying had their last moments soothed by the words of hope and charity murmured in their ears,

and by the faith which forced them, as it were, into the arms of a God too long forgotten?

A few passages from the letter of a Brother of one of the ambulances brings before us the memory of scenes that were enacted daily in every hospital ward:— “Several of the wounded have died in the ambulance after thirty or forty hours’ horrible suffering; they nearly all had bullets in their breast. It was necessary to speak to them of God, and from motives of delicacy the chaplains scarcely ever made the first advance. In spite of my unworthiness God sometimes made use of me to open the way to reconciliation. I approached the patients with reserve and charity, and I easily gained their affection. When the moment seemed to me propitious, I would say gently:— ‘ Since our good God did not let you be killed on the field of battle, don’t you think it would be a good thing if you were to prove your gratitude to Him by *scouring the pot?* ’ I used this expression with the soldiers, as I knew they liked that kind of rough and ready way of talking. Some would answer ‘ yes ’ at once; others would hesitate and wait. Then I used to pray to God, and return to the assault. Nearly all of them went to confession and Holy Communion. ”

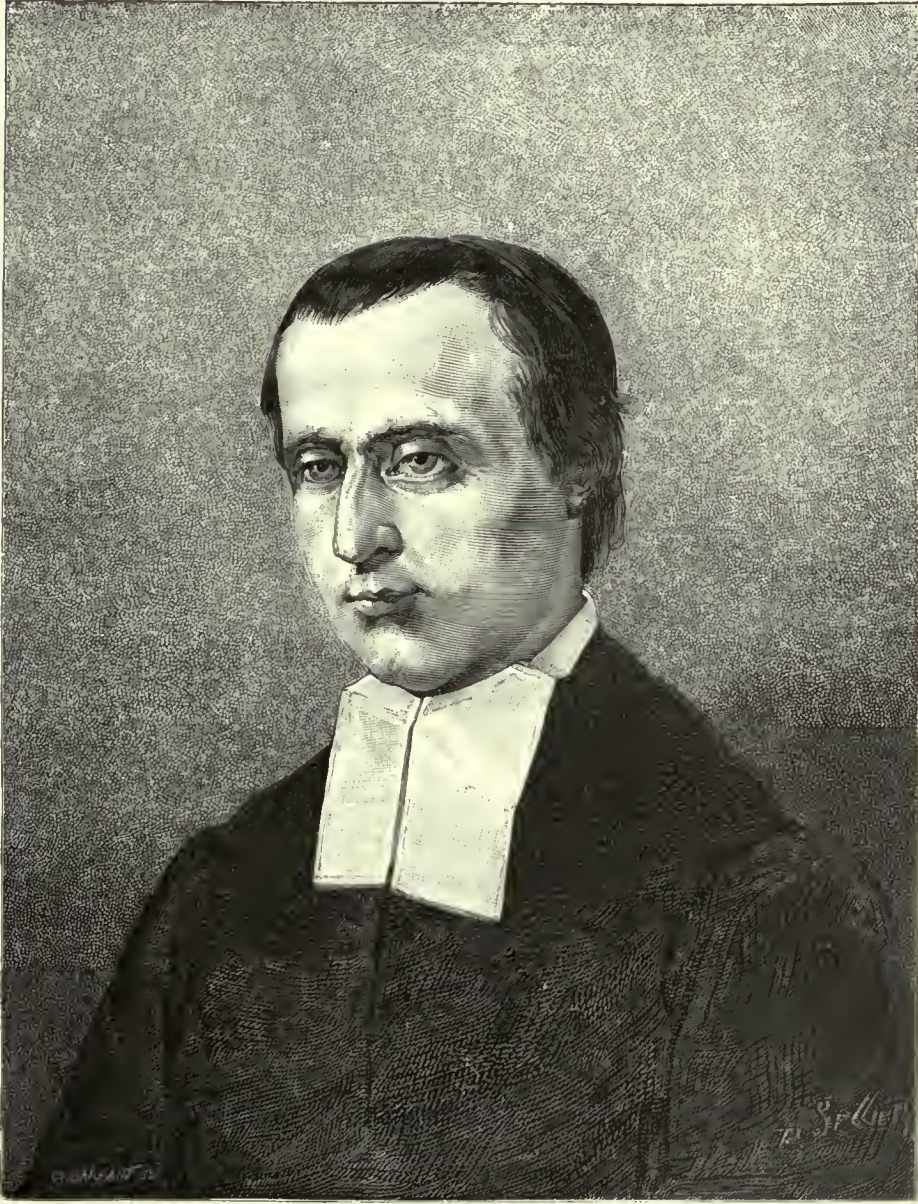
This letter is dated from Paris. It was, indeed, in Paris more than anywhere else that the abnegation of the Brothers was displayed. The community of Rue Oudinot formed a little army in itself, and, with Brother Philip as its general, it won the purest glory in the battles of charity. We can fancy the ambulance with all the picturesque details of its heroic scenes— the wounded brought in on litters, the moving to and fro of a well-kept hospital, the little iron beds with their white sheets, the young Brothers with their Geneva badges, administering medicine to the sick and the wounded; the elders directing, and the crucifix looking down on it all, and giving to the scene its profoundly Christian character. It was truly beautiful.

On the eve of the supreme struggles that were to honor the resistance of the capital, the ambulances of the Press had the happy idea of proposing to the Brothers to serve as *Brancardiers*, litter-bearers.





The word *brancardier* was almost unknown, but, thank to the Brothers, it has become genuinely French. The Superior informed



Brother Nethelme, wounded mortally at Bourget; died December 24th 1870 at Saint-Denis in France.
— Drawn by Sellier; engraved by Barbant.

his children of this proposal of the Paris ambulance, leaving them full liberty as to the answer they should make.

The Brothers did not hesitate an instant.

On the morning of the 29th of November, the day fixed for the attack on Champigny, one hundred and fifty of them were collected before day-break on the Quai de Billy, near the Champ-de-Mars, drawn up in line, like soldiers waiting for the order to march. The attack, as we know, was put off, and it was only on the morrow that the Brothers were enabled to inaugurate their new mission. But the delay did not cool their ardor. They were taken in vehicles to the edge of the battle-field, and they set to work at once. The hour was a solemn one.

Neither the whizzing of the bullets, nor the crash of the shells frightened these humble Religious, fresh from the quiet of their communities. Accustomed to do all things with order, and to obey without discussion, they acquitted themselves of their new duties as if they had been used to them all their lives. They went in amongst the soldiers, and rushed to the spot where the firing was hottest. The moment a man fell, they were at his side, raising him tenderly, laying him on a stretcher, and carrying him gently to the ambulance. Then they came back quietly to their post of charity to wait under the fire of the enemy for fresh wounded.

A Brother was shot in the arm while carrying away a soldier, but he did not drop his burden; he went on with it to the ambulance, and then went back to fetch another. This time a shell burst and hit him in the leg; he pulled out his handkerchief, tied up the wound, and went on with his holy task as if nothing had happened.

The Brothers went forward so recklessly under fire that the officers were obliged to check them. "Stand back, Brothers," cried general Ducrot; "you are too near, there is certain danger in standing there." They drew back reluctantly. When night interrupted the fighting, the Brothers were rallied to be taken back to Paris; but all had not been warned of this, and some of them slept in the bivouac with the soldiers, or continued to search in the dark for the poor sufferers who might have been overlooked. Fancy the horror of a night spent in scour-

ing the frozen country, and feeling the corpses to see if any life still remained ! An ocular witness of the mournful scene alone could describe it :—

“ The man who was driving my carriage was afraid (it is the Brother Director of Montrouge who writes), and his horses would not advance. I left them on the road, and with a lanthorn in my hand, I hurried along through the woods, the fields; but I met nothing but corpses. I called, I listened; but the silence of death reigned everywhere. At last I went to the crackling fire where our soldiers were bivouacking, and there I heard that, towards the end of the day, several wounded had been carried up to a house left standing on the heights. Men found in the ditches behind some slope, at the foot of a wall where they had dragged themselves to die, were waiting there, calm and resigned, until help should come. Amongst them was an honest Vendean whom I recognized. He had been wounded the day before, at nine in the morning, and it was I who had picked him up, and placed him in the ambulance cart. A movement of the troops and the overcrowding had caused him to be forgotten. What must the poor lad have suffered on the edge of that ditch where he had been lying all day ! There were twenty one of these unfortunate fellows. Happily Providence had not sent me to their rescue alone; two other ambulance carts had preceded mine. We placed them in these as gently and comfortably as we could, and then set off. Our vehicles went one after the other. On the top of Joinville a Prussian shell burst close to us, and put out our lamps, but luckily did not hurt us. At half past four in the morning, we were in Paris in the Rue Saint Antoine, hunting for quarters for our twenty-one wounded; but all the ambulances had been filled the night before. We found a place for them, however, and then I set off again to Champigny. But what had become of the unfortunate wounded whose cries for help had gone through me, and whom I had not been able to find. I went on to the plain of Noisy, and there more than eighty frozen corpses proclaimed against the cruelty of our enemies. Some had died in horrible contorsions, tearing the

earth and pulling up the grass around them; others were awful to see with their eyes open and their hands clenched, as if threatening; some, with their hands raised to heaven and their features quite calm, announced that they had passed away resigned and peaceful."

Two days after this, the battle began again, and the Brothers were there, courageous, indefatigable. There was but one voice in their praise :— " One of the great subjects of conversation amongst the soldiers is the conduct of the Brothers. These men in black who, calm and stoical, come and go amidst the bullets, and save our wounded, are the admiration of our soldiers. These two hundred Brothers have, indeed, set a great example of courage. More than ten times our generals have had to force them to wait till the firing ceased before they went to pick up the wounded. " Such was the language of the whole press the day after Champigny. We have only quoted one journal.

When the fight was over, and our poor soldiers, heroically vanquished, were compelled to see that they could not cut through the iron wall that barred their way, it was time to think of burying the dead, and it was to the Brothers that this task fell. For two long days, they never ceased taking up the bodies on which the snow had thrown a white pall. They lifted them piously, placed them in carts, and then laid them reverently in the deep trenches that were destined to receive the remains of these brave men who had fallen in defence of France. The ghastly labor was still unfinished when the evening of the second day closed in; they were obliged to continue it by the light of the torches that flickered over the field of death. It was far on in the night when the Brothers, spent with fatigue, were able to finish the vast funeral. When the plain was at last cleared of the dead that had been scattered over its surface, when the frozen and mutilated bodies had been laid to rest, the Brothers knelt down, and their voice, broken with tears, murmured a farewell prayer for the departed ones.

Scarcely had a fortnight elapsed when the battle of Bourget gave





the Brothers a fresh opportunity of proving their patriotism. On the 21st of December, they were to be seen at the most advanced points of the French lines, waiting to carry off the wounded, ready to succor the dying. But at Bourget they were destined to be more severely tried than at Champigny, or, to use more Christian language, better rewarded.

As soon as the firing ceased in the direction of Courneuve, a detachment of Brothers was sent on the ground where the furious fight had lasted for several minutes. The flag of the Convention of Geneva was being carried before the ambulance men, when suddenly a volley was fired from the Prussian ranks. One of the litter-bearers fell with a bullet in his breast. His name was John Baptist Baffie, in religion Brother Nethelme. He was carried at once to Saint Denis; but the surgeons declared the wound was mortal.

Far from frightening the Brothers, this glorious event excites them. The most perilous posts are the ones they try for, and the medical men are in admiration of the zeal, skill and courage of their new auxiliaries. Doctor Ricord, who did so much for the ambulances, is never tired of expressing his admiration for the Brothers. On the evening of the battle of Bourget, he met Brother Assistant : — “ My dear Brother, ” he said, “ how is our dear patient? ” — “ Badly, Doctor, very badly; we have very little hope. ” — “ Brother, ” said the Doctor with emotion, and holding out his hand, “ is one ever allowed to embrace you? ” — “ There is nothing in the Rule against it. ” — “ Then, permit me to have the honor of embracing you. You are admirable, you and yours. Take this kiss from me to Brother Philip and all your Brothers, and tell them that we all thank you, in our name, and in the name of France. ”

On the 22nd of December, a new battle saw the brave litter-bearers and ambulance men at their post, intrepid, silent and simple. Whilst they were braving the fire, their Brother Nethelme was consummating his sacrifice in the most atrocious sufferings. He expired holily on the 24th of December. An immense crowd

attended his funeral, wishing to pay a last tribute to the martyr, and to do honor to the Institute which inspired its members with such modest and noble self-devotion.

A few days later, the same crowd followed with sentiments of still deeper piety the biers of five poor children of Saint Nicolas who had been killed by the bursting of a Prussian shell in their dormitory.

We will not enumerate the services rendered by the Brothers during the combat of Buzenval, that supreme but fruitless effort of Paris besieged; but we cannot pass over in silence the inexhaustible charity which they practised in those ambulances of Paris into which the wounded were carried. After having, at the very beginning of the war, sent infirmarians to the ambulances of the Eastern and Northern Railway stations, Brother Philip offered the mother-house of Rue Oudinot to organize a vast military hospital where, as we have seen, the wounded were most tenderly cared for by the Brothers. The Doctors who directed this blessed asylum again and again expressed their gratitude to these intelligent assistants: — “It is impossible,” said Doctor Horteloup, “to find more zeal and more abnegation than they display.”

The infirmarians of the ambulances had their martyr as well as those of the battle-field; Brother Berrier, aged nineteen, fell a victim to typhoid fever contracted in nursing the sick. God alone knows which of the two martyrdoms was the most glorious.

The service of the pavilions built at Longchamp for the ambulances of the Press was confided to the Brothers. Here, after the armistice, they continued to take care of many unfortunate victims of the last battles who were nailed for a long time on a bed of suffering, and they would have carried on their charitable ministry to the end if the leaders of the commune had not brutally driven them away. The sick and wounded wept bitterly when their kind nurses were torn from them.

After bravely taking their part in the war, the Brothers were to undergo new trials under the reign of those madmen whom

God for two months allowed to be masters of Paris. The Brothers of Menilmontant, seized when teaching in their school, were kept in prison, and subjected to all manner of insults and threats. These holy Religious were pursued on all sides in order to be enrolled in the ranks of the insurgents; six and twenty were taken and shut up at Mazas with the hostages. It was by chance that they were not included in the massacres that stained the last days of May and terrified the world.

Brother Calixtus, Assistant, remained at the mother-house during those terrible months of April and May, which perhaps have not their parallel in the history of any people. As early as the 11th of April, "a commissary and a delegate of the Commune, accompanied by some forty national guards, surround the house of Rue Oudinot, and declare that, in default of the Superior, they have orders to arrest whoever represents him. Brother Calixtus presents himself; all the Brothers want to go with him. The crowd gathers in the street, giving signs of grief and indignation; the national guards themselves are moved to tears, and at last Brother Calixtus is set at liberty¹."

When order was re-established, France wished to show her gratitude to an Institute which has served her so well. The French Academy had to discern a prize offered by the city of Boston "to the finest example of patriotism which had been given during the war." The choice of the Academy fell upon the Institute of Blessed de la Salle. No one in France was more surprised at this than the Brothers.

Doctor Ricord, who had seen the Brothers at work during the dark days, wished also to pay his tribute to them now that peace had returned, and, as a new year's gift for 1872, he wrote a frank and charming letter to Brother Philip: — "Go on; continue your beautiful mission. You will not always fall upon ingrates. Many will remember that you taught them their first letters, the first correct and proper word of their language, and the first prayer

¹ Circular of Brother Philip.

they addressed to God." This passage, which we extract from the surgeon's letter, is better than many diplomas¹.



Doctor Ricord. — Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Meaule.

¹ Translation of the fac-simile of Doctor Ricord's letter—

Paris, January 1st 1872.

To the very honored Brother Philip, Superior of the Communities of the Brothers of the Christian schools.

Very honored Brother,

Here you are, henceforth quiet, after so much fatigue, and after having run so many dangers. You and the good Brothers of your community are at last restored to your quiet life so full of charity; you have got back your children, the children of the people that you so patiently instruct.

Go on, continue your beautiful mission. You will not always make ingrates. Many will remember that you taught them their first letters, the first correct and proper word of their language, and the first prayer they addressed to God.

Yours ever,

RICORD.

Paris le 1^{er} janvier 1872

Aux honoré frère Philippe,
Supérieur des Communautés des frères
des Ecoles Chrétiennes.

Frère honoré,

vous voilà désormais tranquille, apaisé,
de fatigues et après avoir couru tant de
dangers. Vous et les bons frères de vos
communautés vous êtes enfin rendus à votre
vie calme et toute de charité; vous avez
retrouvé vos enfants, les enfants du
peuple, que vous instruisiez si patiemment.
Allez continuer votre belle mission, sans
en faire pas toujours de regrets, beaucoup se
souviendront que vous leur avez adressé la
première lettre, le premier mot corré et ab-
solut de leur langue et la première prière
qu'ils doivent adresser à Dieu.

à vous toujours;

Ricord

It was now, too, that Brother Philip was forced to accept the cross of the Legion of Honor. It was very hard to conquer his modesty; but at last an argument was found which overcame his noble resistance: — “ It is the Institute of the Christian Brothers that is being honored in you,” they pleaded. And Brother Philip yielded.

These unanimous testimonies of admiration for the Brothers went deep into the heart of the Superior general; but another and more precious consolation was reserved to his old age: he had the joy of seeing the progress which the cause of the holy founder of the Institute was making in Rome. This cause had been begun in 1835; on the 8th of May 1840, Gregory XVI. declared the founder of the Christian schools VENERABLE. Three and thirty years later, on the 1st of November 1873, appeared the decree which declared that “ John Baptist de la Salle had practised the great Christian virtues in a heroic degree.” Things are not done hurriedly in Rome. Those three and thirty years were as a minute there.

Brother Philip was called to Rome to assist at the solemn glorification of his predecessor, and Pius IX. received him with that smile which illuminated all Christendom during the longest and most glorious of pontificates. They had together some of those interviews which are not revealed; but we may guess what passed between the great Pope, accustomed to govern men, and the aged Religious accustomed to govern children who were one day to be men.

After having assisted at the first triumph of John Baptist de la Salle, and discussed the great business of his Institute with the Sovereign Pontiff, Brother Philip had to tear himself away from Rome to return and end amidst his children his life of sacrifice and love. No one ever left Pius IX. without a pang, and Brother Philip felt this pang. “ The Holy Father,” he wrote home, “ permitted us to kiss his hand, and having given us his blessing for ourselves and the whole Institute, we again prostrated ourselves





three times before him. The moment was full of deep emotion,



Brother Philip in the last years of his life, from a portrait preserved at the mother-house of the Institute.
— Drawn by Sellier; engraved by Barbant.

above all for me, who said to myself : ‘ Alas ! is it not for the last time ? ’ When one has been received with such kindness by so

great, so magnanimous, so illustrious a Pontiff, by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, one cannot leave him without bedewing the ground with tears."

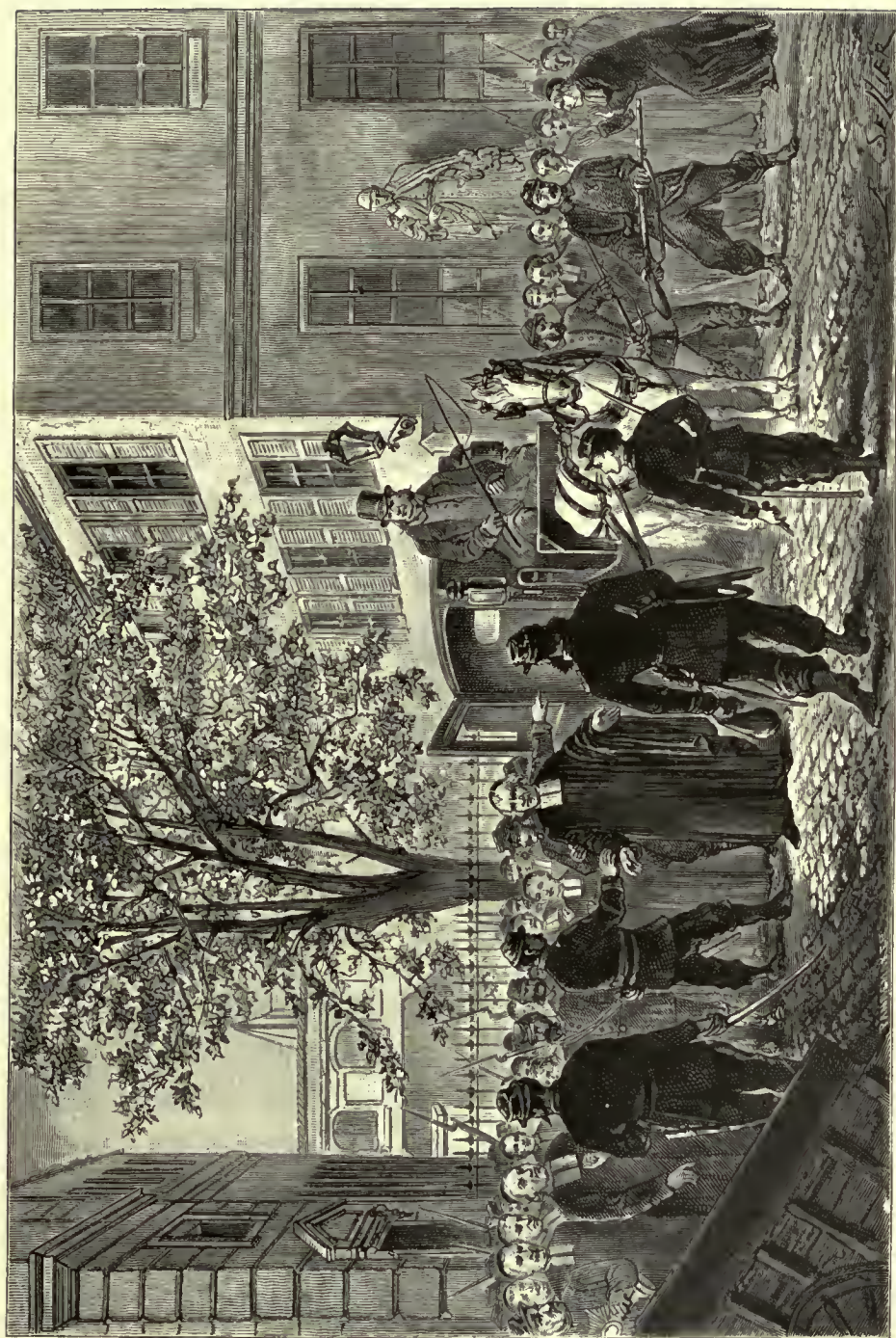
This presentiment of the holy Religious was but too true. He had but few remaining days to occupy himself with his communities, his dear novices and his schools.

On December 31st 1873, although very poorly, he received the deputation of the pupils of Saint Nicolas for New Year's Day, and said a few words to them which may be taken as the last will and testament of a man whose entire life had been so nobly devoted to popular education : — " My dear children," he said, " I thank you for putting yourselves to the inconvenience of coming out so early to wish me a happy New Year. Perhaps I shall not see the end of it. — I am touched by the sentiments you express, and I form only one wish for you, that is that you may advance in virtue. Continue to serve God well; this will be the way to be happy in this world and in the next. — Love your parents, who make such sacrifices for you. Love the dear Brothers, who devote themselves to your interests and your future, and remember their good advice all your lives. Adieu, my dear children! "

On the 1st of January, he wished to assist once more at mass and go to Holy Communion in the midst of his Brothers. It was the last time he appeared amongst them, the last time he occupied his stall and knelt in his accustomed place to receive the bread of the strong. When mass was over, he went back to his cell at the request of the Brother Infirmarian, and lay down, never to rise again. On the 6th of January, his condition grew alarming. He received his God with fervent piety, and the Vicar of Christ sent a blessing to the dying man whom he remembered having clasped so lovingly to his heart. Brother Philip died on the 7th of January.

In the Institute of the Christian schools¹ there is one word which the Christian Brother, even in his agony, responds to with alacrity : " May Jesus live in our hearts! " — He answers : " For-

¹ Poujoulat, pp. 359, 360.





ever!" And this may be considered his pass-word on the threshold of eternity. Towards eight o'clock in the morning, Brother Irlide, Assistant, bent over the Very Honored, and pronounced these words of Jesus on the Cross: "My God, I commend my soul into thy hands!" Then he added: "May Jesus live in our hearts!" Brother Philip, like a soldier who answers faithfully to the roll-call, tried to reply: "Forever!" but, in making the effort, he expired.

The Community, assembled in the chapel, where they were saying the Rosary, ended their prayer by the *De Profundis*. The Institute was orphaned of its beloved father.

As soon as the sad news was known in Paris, it was followed by an outburst of grief and sympathy which proved eloquently how deeply the holy Religious was loved. During the two days that preceded the funeral, the chapel where the mortal remains of Brother Philip lay, was besieged by a pious crowd who wanted to look once more upon "the Saint."

On the 10th of January, the lowly hearse which bore him to his last resting place was accompanied by a vast concourse of people. Men of all classes and conditions held to assisting at the funeral of the illustrious old man who had labored so long in the service of the Church and of France. It was one of these manifestations which reveal the secret of a whole nation's heart; it was a noble concert where each one, obeying the dictates of his heart, came spontaneously to join in the song of praise and gratitude.

The generalship of Brother Philip may be taken as the most august type of the whole order. It includes every form of self-devotion, and the complete realization of all the views of its holy founder, even those which he had never been permitted to carry out to their perfection himself. Such a life is a monument which, despite the evil days we are passing through, will endure as a long and glorious testimony.

May this record contribute to the fruitful triumph of Blessed John Baptist de la Salle!



New York, where the Brothers direct the *Protectory* and several schools (p. 533). — Drawn by Brun; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER VI.

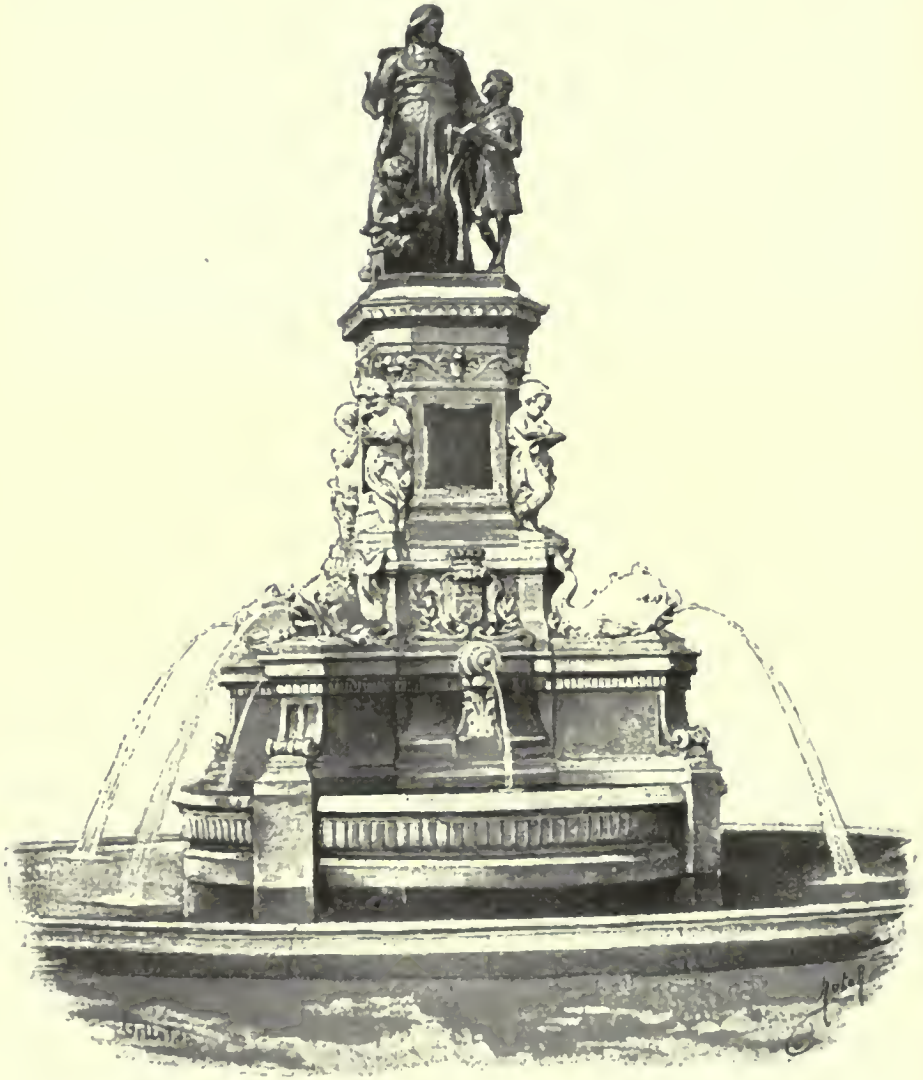
THE PRESENT HOUR.



ROther John Olympe, who succeeded Brother Philip, only governed the Institute one year. But a great joy illuminated this too short generalship : a beautiful monument was erected at Rouen to the memory of the holy founder of the Institute. Too many statues are raised now-a-days, encumbering the public squares and seldom either beautifying or dignifying them.

Amongst these stone trophies some are put up in honor of unknown men, mediocrities, corruptors of the people. It is one of the abuses of the age. But it is a genuine consolation for noble

hearts to see, placed upon a pedestal, the figure of a man who deserves universal esteem. Such is the feeling experienced by every honest soul on beholding that bronze statue of Blessed de



Monument raised, at Rouen, to Blessed John Baptist de la Salle. (See frontispiece.) — Drawn by Nator.

la Salle, which is not one of the least ornaments of the fine old city of Rouen.

In 1872, the idea of paying this solemn tribute to his memory was started, and the approbation of the municipality and the government having been obtained, a committee was formed under

the patronage of Cardinal de Bonnechose. From every country where the disciples of the holy man have carried his blessed in-



Monument raised, at Rouen, to Blessed John Baptist de la Salle. Details of the fountain.
 — The four parts of the world, typified by boys learning, under the direction of Blessed de la Salle,
 the rudiment of Divine and human sciences. — Drawn by Sellier.

fluence, subscriptions flowed in. The poor gave their mite with the rich man's generous offering, all testifying to the immense

popularity which the Brothers and their work deservedly enjoyed. The result was a large sum whose moral effect was excellent.

A competition was then opened, and a number of designs were sent in to the Committee. The choice fell unanimously on the one presented by M. Falguière, the pedestal of which was designed by M. de Perthes. This choice could not fail to meet with general approval. M. Falguière's Christian and classical statue of St Tharcissus had already revealed him as a great sculptor. As to M. de Perthes, the proof of his talent is visible to all on the exterior of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, and of the basilica of Saint Anne d'Auray. Blessed de la Salle is represented in the act of teaching the elements of Christian doctrine and the principles of human science to two children : one, of seven, who has just come to the school; the other, a lad of fifteen, who is about to leave it, and make his entry into the world, where he will have to take his place in the struggle between good and evil. What the artist aimed at representing in the statue, a work of great power, was the supernatural devotedness of Blessed de la Salle to the mind and soul of so many millions of poor children. No one ever loved the people more than he did; no one ever exemplified more perfectly these words of the Master :— *Sinite parvulos venire ad me.*

The square of Saint Sever, which the Blessed de la Salle had so often crossed in his daily rounds, was chosen as the spot best suited to be the site of this monument to his memory.

The ceremony of the unveiling of the statue was performed in the midst of an indescribable manifestation of popular enthusiasm on the 2nd of June 1875¹. The Archbishop of Rheims and seven other Bishops had assembled with Cardinal de Bonnechose to glorify the memory of this humble priest who had so loved the

¹ By a strange coincidence, it was on the 2nd of June that Armand Ravelet, author of that part of this book which treats of Blessed de la Salle, died. He had one of the brightest, the most productive and the noblest minds that we have ever known. Chief editor of the *Monde*, he was placed in the foremost ranks of the Catholic army, and never failed in any of the duties imposed upon him by this arduous post. He was "a great Christian" in the full sense of the word, and worthy of understanding Blessed de la Salle. No one has spoken of the holy founder more becomingly than he.

people. Deputations were sent from all points, while the presence of all the magistrates of the city, and an enormous affluence of the population, made of the event a solemn tribute to the memory of Blessed de la Salle and his disciples.



Brother John-Olympe, tenth Superior general, born at la Chapelle-des-Bois, diocese of Besançon, July 4th 1813; entered the Institute June 17th 1837; elected Superior general April 9th 1874; died in Paris April 17th 1875.

— Engraved by Méaulle from a photograph of F. A.

The new Superior had not the consolation of assisting at this festival; he only witnessed it from on high. Brother John Olympe, ripe for heaven, died almost suddenly in the month of April 1875.

Brother Irlide, former Director of the boarding-schools of Toulouse and Bayonne, then visitor of the district whose chief town is Bayonne, was named Assistant in 1873. His experience of

business, his wide information and his judicial knowledge made him a valuable chief for the congregation. In 1875, he succeeded to Brother John Olympe.

Faithful to the traditions of Brother Philip, he held to carrying on all the undertakings of his illustrious predecessor. But these



Brother Irlande, eleventh Superior general, from a portrait which belongs to the Institute.
— Engraved by Hugot.

works were manifold, and amongst them were some that the new Superior naturally preferred to others. It was to the preparatory novitiates that he chiefly devoted his zeal. He gave a new development to this institution, which is so essential for the recruiting of the Institute. He drew up a special rule for it, taking his inspiration from the book written by Blessed de la Salle. Brother

Irlide reaped the reward of his solicitude. The number of little novices, which was one hundred and fifty when he took the reins of the Institute, had increased to thirteen hundred when he died. Another diadem in his crown, and a measure which has greatly aided in giving a new religious impulse to the Congregation, was the introduction of the Exercices of St Ignatius during thirty days for all the professed Brothers of the Institute, and for those on the eve of making their profession. Brother Irlide continued at the same time to scatter the seed of Christian doctrine in distant lands. By his care were founded the house of Jerusalem, the Novitiate of Ramleh, the schools of Jaffa, Caïffa, Trebizond and Erzeroum. The Institute was progressing steadily.

For many years, the Superior general's dream was to introduce the Brothers into Spain, and during his sojourn at Bayonne, he had cleared the way for the advance of the Institute into that most Catholic country. In 1876 the desire of his heart was realized. He opened a house in Madrid, and thence the schools of the Brothers continued to spread through the Catholic kingdom. These remote interests did not abate his watchful care of the schools of France, nor the improvement of the methods.

The extraordinary success of the Institute at the Exhibition of 1878 was the occasion of a new appeal from him to his Religious, stimulating them to go on and improve, advancing from better to better. It was, indeed, well that the excellence of the teaching in the Christian schools should strike all observers, for a fierce and implacable warfare was about to be declared against them.

Brother Irlide bore up against the attack with indefatigable ardor. The times were evil, and the Revolution had thrown off its mask. Under the perfidious name of secularization, it was about to make a new and powerful attempt to snatch youth and childhood from Christ. Such an attempt, if it proved successful, was certain to be, humanly speaking, more fatal to the Church than all the persecutions and bloodshed of 1793. The Superior of the Institute saw this very clearly. He saw also that the Catholics of our day were called upon to carry the war into the enemy's

country, and that in pedagogy, as in everything else, it behoved them to stand higher than their adversaries. In science, in letters,



Pius IX., who gave so many proofs of deep and unfailing affection to the Institute (p. 240).
— Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Farlet.

in higher education, secondary or primary, everywhere and in all things they should be the first.

Brother Irlide had a long experience of scholastic affairs, and treated the principal questions raised by secularization in a series of articles whose conclusions received the sanction of the Council of State several times. He appealed with scientific strictness to



Leo XIII., happily reigning, under whose pontificate Venerable de la Salle was proclaimed "Blessed."
— Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Méaulle.

the text of the laws and decrees, and pleaded in the interests of the schools, as well as in the name of common sense and equity. He drew up several notes on the legal existence and civil personality of the Brothers, and his arguments were so cogent, that the Council of State unanimously recognized the legitimate rights of the Institute to its prerogatives.

Hardly had it won this triumph, than another grave question was raised by the municipality of Paris. The Council wanted to turn the Brothers out of their house in Rue Oudinot. Brother Irlide returned to the charge, and exposed the obligations which the city



Monsiegnur Gousset, Cardinal Archbishop of Rheims, friend and protector of the Institute.
— Engraved by Hayot.

had incurred by its contract with the Institute. The Council of State, convinced by the solidity of his arguments, decided that the settling of the conflict belonged to the civil tribunals.

Providence, amidst these hard trials, raised up powerful protectors for the Brothers. Pope Leo XIII. continued towards them the benign affection of Pius IX., and was carrying on the cause

of Blessed de la Salle's beatification. The learned Cardinal Pitra, who had been named protector of the Congregation near the Holy See, considered this patronage one of his first and dearest duties. The Bishops of France were no less earnestly preoccupied



His Eminence Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims (p. 561). — Engraved by Huyot.

concerning the destinies of the Institute, both in defending it against fresh persecutions, and in hastening the honors that Rome was about to render to its holy founder. Cardinal Langénieux continued at Rheims the generous traditions of Cardinal Gousset, and Mgr Thomas, at Rouen, those of Cardinal de Bonnechose. The

excellent Viscount de Melun was a noble representative of the secular element in this group of patrons and friends, whilst the wise and holy Cardinal Guibert gave to all the prelates of France



His Eminence Cardinal de Bonnechose, Archbishop of Rouen (p. 301).
— Drawn by Krug; engraved by Ménelle.

an example of devotedness that never faltered. In the Chamber, too, eloquent and courageous voices were raised on behalf of the Brothers, and it would be unjust not to point out here to the gratitude of all Catholics that indefatigable orator who for twenty years has been every day and all day on the breach, heroically

defending Catholic interest. A just posterity will place him by the side of Montalembert. It is not necessary to name M. Chesne-



Monseigneur Thomas, Archbishop of Rouen (p. 561). — Engraved by Méaulle.

long; but we held to paying him this tribute of respect, though it be so far beneath his worth, his talent and his faith.

Another consolation for Brother Irlide was the second centenary of the foundation of the Institute of the Brothers which was kept with an enthusiasm and spontaneity as gratifying as they were unlooked for. The Superior general had intended to celebrate the event as a family festival; but in every country where the Brothers are established, Catholics seized with avidity the opportunity of manifesting their gratitude to Blessed de la Salle.

This tribute of esteem was universal. In every country where the black robe of the Brothers is familiar, the outburst of sympathy was sincere and fervent. The concert of praise had arisen at Rouen in 1875, but it was echoed now all over the Christian world. In Paris, the seat of the Institute, in Rheims, the birth-place of Blessed de la Salle, in every diocese of France, the same joy was manifested. It was an œcumenical feast.

The difficult circumstances in which the Institute was placed added a heavy extra weight to Brother Irlide's burden. He ended by breaking down under it. Calmly and with a steady hand, he addressed a circular to the Brothers, arranging for a meeting of the general Chapter to elect his successor. Having finished this letter, his strength rapidly declined, and he died on the 25th of July 1884.

Brother Joseph was elected to succeed to him. It will be understood why we are silent on the threshold of this generalship. The only homage which the new superior consents to accept from us is a faithful account of the state of the Institute at the present time. We shall endeavor to give an accurate and animated description of its situation.

“ You will judge of the tree by its fruits. ” Those words of Christ are eternally true, and may be used as an epigraph for the last chapter of every book which gives the history of a political institution, or a religious order. What are the fruits of the

tree planted by Blessed de la Salle? This is the question we are about to answer, and that answer shall be the conclusion of this work.

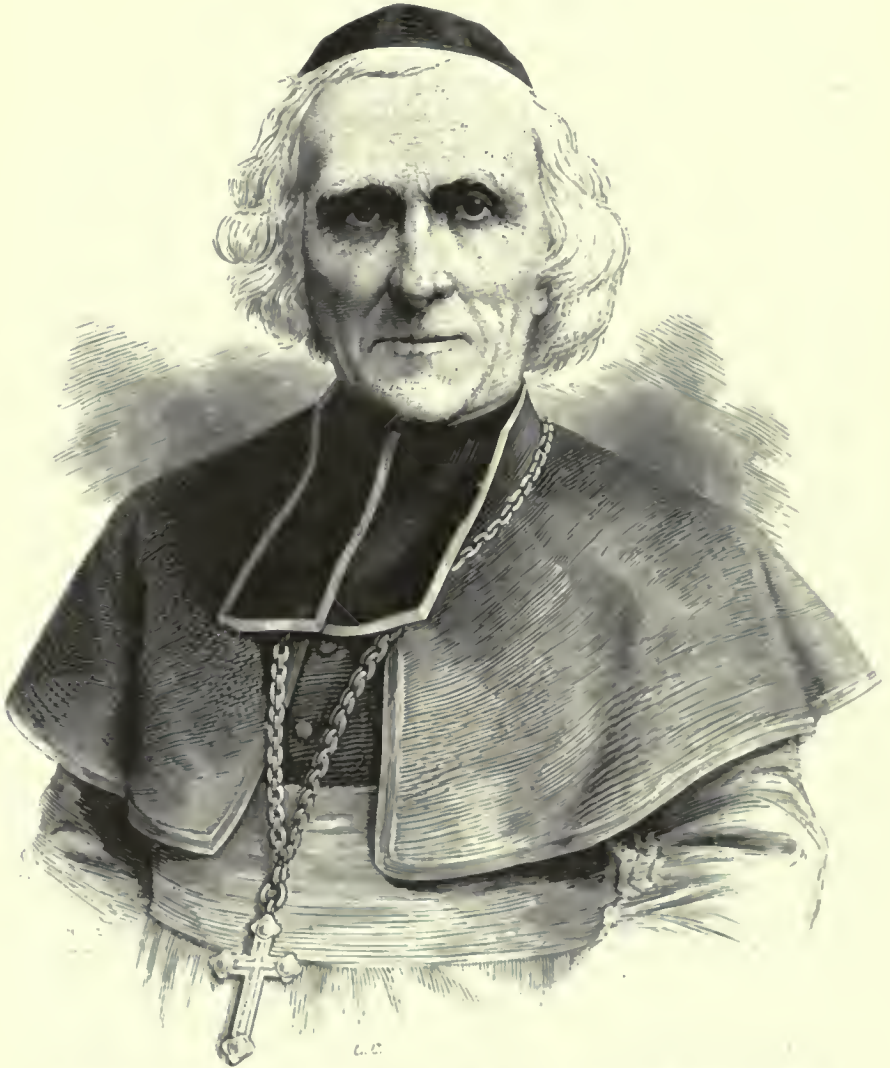
The Institute extends at the present day over the five parts of the world, and it would take a very long time indeed to render an exact account of its existing condition and results.

Let us start from the mother-house of Paris. This house is a little world in itself, a calm, well regulated world, which makes us think of God. In the first court, we see Oliva's statue of Blessed de la Salle. Our thoughts are attracted to the holy founder by it at once, and its air of majesty is not unbecoming a Saint. In the vast and lofty parlor, we see that master-piece of Horace Vernet, the portrait of Brother Philip. Opposite, is the more recent work of Charles Muller, which reproduces the gentle countenance of the servant of God, and, between these two works of art, Krug's fine painting, "Blessed de la Salle teaching in the schools." How many Bishops in quest of Brothers for their distant dioceses have passed through that parlor of Rue Oudinot; how many holy conversations and noble ideas might not its white walls echo!

This first court is almost deserted; but the rest of the house, without being noisy, is full of life. You meet Brothers and young novices at every step. Yonder is the garden, favorable to meditation; at the end of it is a reproduction of Falguière's group. You might fancy yourself a hundred miles from Paris. The bell is ringing for Vespers and Benediction, so we will go into the chapel. The present writer has seen the Catholic services performed in the grand cathedrals of France, England and Rome; but he was never more edified anywhere than in this chapel of Rue Oudinot. The monastic quiet of the place is enlivened by the bright and stirring element of youth contributed by the novices. It is very different from Solesmes, and yet all is strict, liturgical and most touching.

That stair-case leads to the study of the Very Honored Brother Joseph, the present Superior general, and further on to the hall of the *Régime*, or Direction. If ever you enter there, let it be with

respect. It is from here that some fifteen thousand souls¹ are directed in the path traced for them by Blessed de la Salle, and it is here that, in the name of Jesus Christ, they are guided with



His Eminence Cardinal Gilbert, Archbishop of Paris (1842). — Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Chapon.

paternal tenderness, and supported by the encouragements of experience, the most practical lessons and the wisest advice. There

¹ The Institute reckoned in December 31st 1886, 11 712 Religious, 1 007 Novices, 2 120 little Novices : a total of 14 849 persons enrolled under divers titles under the flag of Blessed de la Salle.

it is that every day and at all hours they receive tidings from every part of the globe, and converse, so to speak, with the directors of all the houses of Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

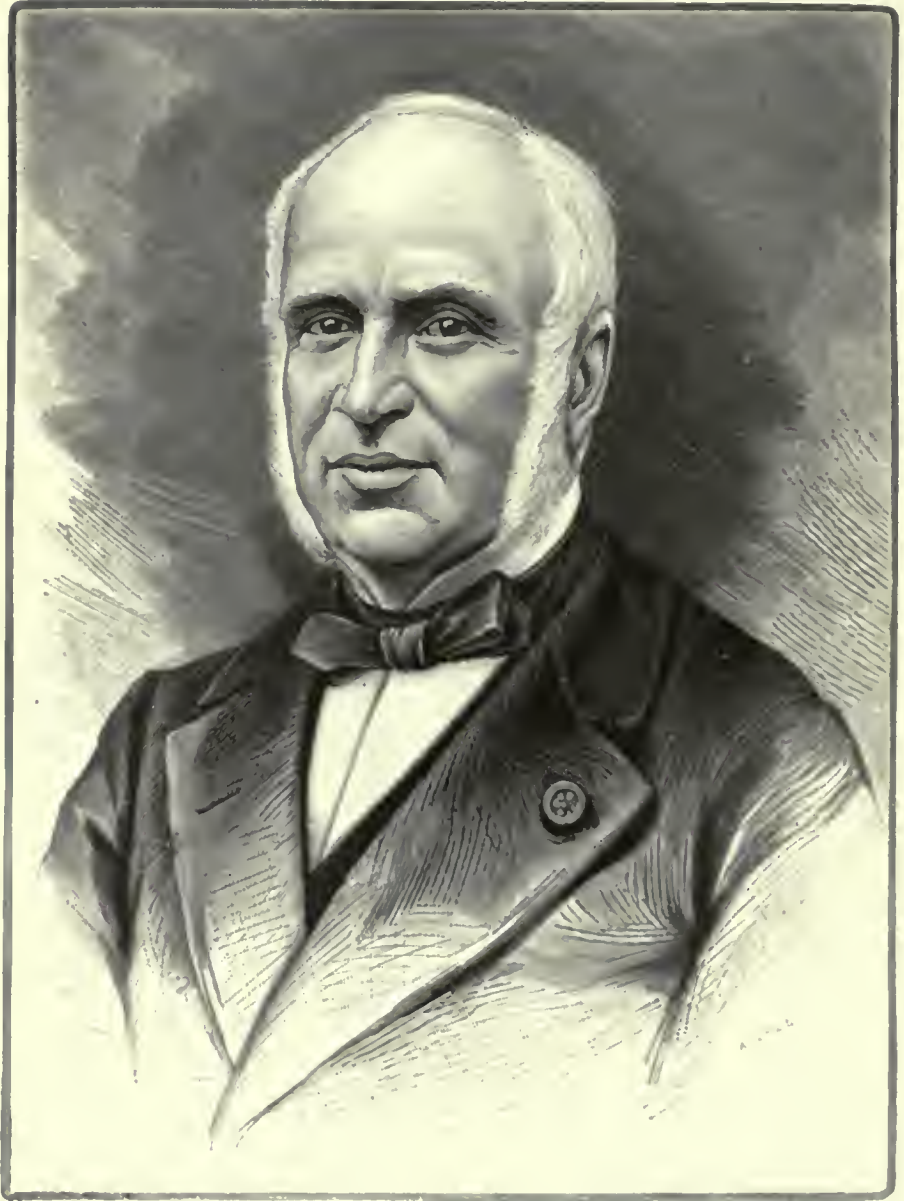


The Viscount de Melun (p. 562). — Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Néeulle.

Here the destinies of three and thirty preparatory novitiates¹, six and thirty novitiates², twenty-eight scholasticates of the Institute³, and ninety-seven houses of “religious training⁴,” where the

¹ Boys of from thirteen to sixteen who have shown a decided inclination for the religious life, are received here, and their education is carried on while their vocation is being tried. = ² For religious training, properly so called. After further trial, the young men are clothed in the religious habit. = ³ The young Religious receive here their finishing education, professional and pedagogical. = ⁴ In December 31st 1886, these ninety-seven houses contained no less than 3840 subjects.

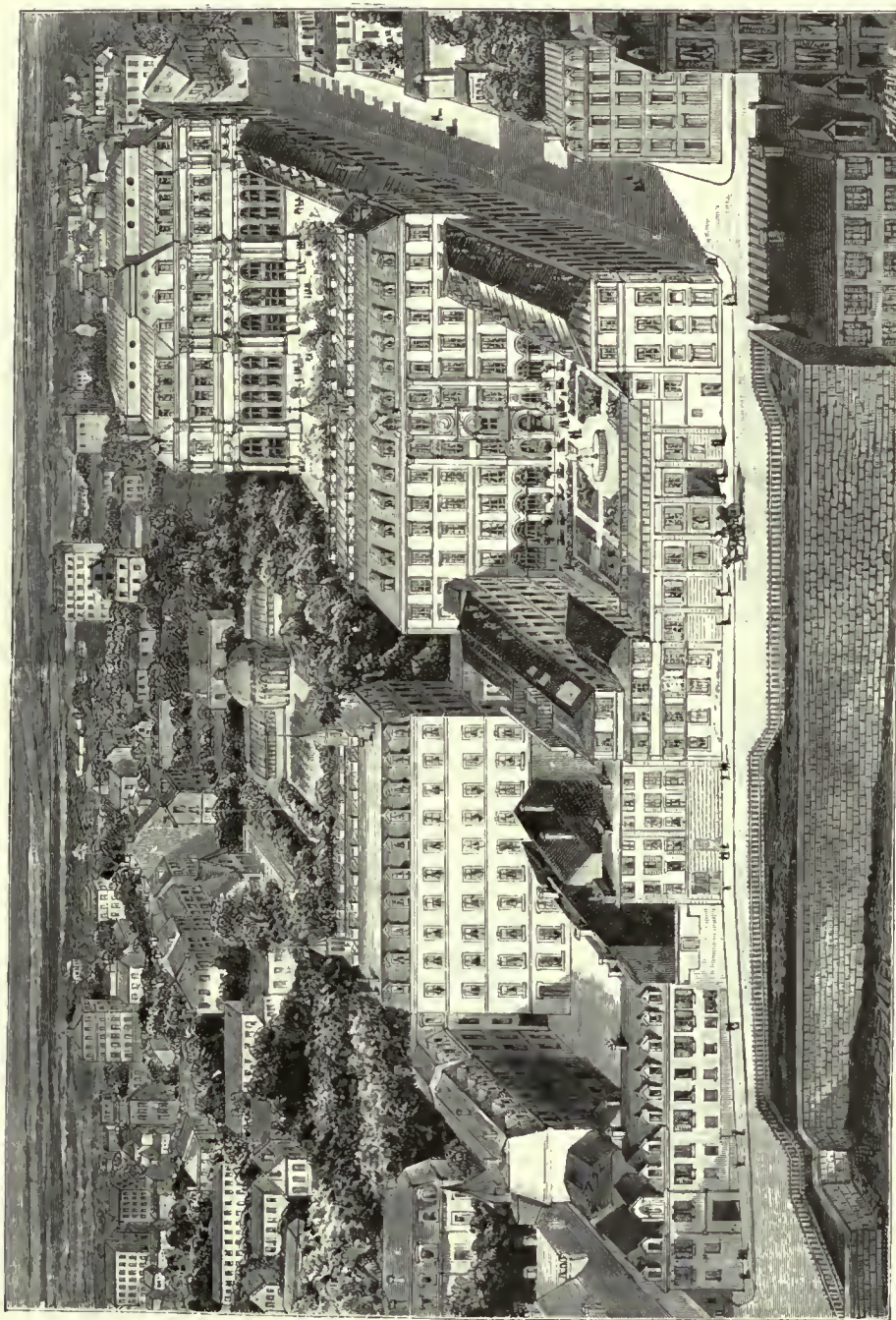
very sap and future strength of the Institute is prepared, are all carefully watched over, studied and provided for.



M. Chesnelong, devoted friend and champion of the Institute (p. 562, 563).
— Drawn by Thadée; engraved by Napier.

Here everything is planned out which is likely to be of any benefit to the fourteen hundred and ninety schools directed by the

Brothers, and to the hundred and eighty boarding-schools. Here



The boarding-school of the Brothers at Passy (p. 574). — Drawn by Sellier; engraved by M. Gault.

is the centre of their progress; progress in the religious and peda-

gogical order, progress for the soul and the body, of over three hundred thousand children¹.

Under the guidance of these figures, let us begin our tour through France, and let us not forget that the Institute, which is French in its origin, has developed chiefly on French soil. France alone reckons nearly nine thousand Brothers dispersed over nine hundred and seventy houses². These statistics, like those of the Sisters of Charity, justify us in feeling a certain legitimate pride, as well as hope in the future. In presence of such a testimony, we ought not to despair.

Before leaving Paris³, we must visit in detail one of the schools, study its mechanism, and question the humble masters who possess such profound knowledge of child nature in general, and Parisian children in particular. We will also take note, according to the rules of M. Le Play, of those social types called a professional boarding-school, a club for the young, and an orphanage.

For all who consider dispassionately the state of public education in the two worlds, it is evident that the old world is passing through a grave crisis. For several centuries, the children of the nobility and the higher middle classes of France have received a secondary education wholly classical and literary—a great deal of Latin, some Greek, and a little French. For a long time, the sciences only came in the second place, and nowhere were they as much attended to as letters. But now, all this is changed; letters are beginning to be undeservedly despised, while the first place is assigned to sciences, because, forsooth, they are more practical. The influence of America is making itself felt, and soon the time will come when we shall have nothing but engineers, whilst

¹ The exact number in December 31st 1886, was 398 397 children or lads, 6 663 classes. The *Internats* include 128 boarding-schools, properly so called, and 52 Orphanages, Protectories, and so forth. The 1 490 schools receive 284 236 day-scholars, and the 180 *Internats*, 24 131 boarders. = ² The precise number of Brothers, in France, is 8 839. The 970 houses include 1 036 schools, public and private 406 Boarding-schools (*Internats*), and 39 Orphanages, and following. The Institute has in France 22 small and 21 great novitiates, with 22 scholasticates for the religious and pedagogical training of its members; making a total of 72 establishments called "training houses." = ³ In Paris, 1 009 Brothers are dispersed through 96 schools and 502 classes. The figures contained in the foregoing notes all date from December 31st 1886.

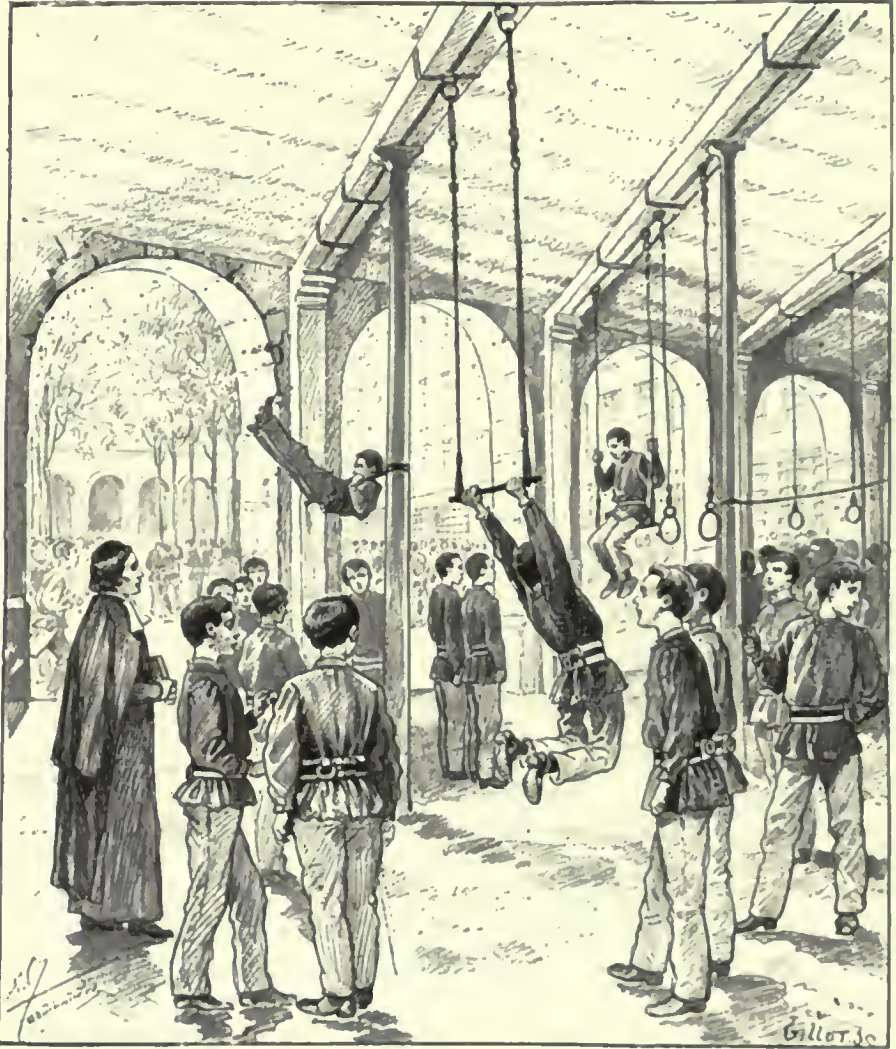
in its turn America shall cultivate the higher studies in literature and philosophy. Till then, we will content ourselves with tacking between the classical and the University system. The Brothers



Saint Nicholas in Paris. — The work-shop of the carpenters (p. 572). — Fac-simile of a sketch of Ferdinandus.

were the first to seize the true point of the situation, and their house at Passy, for the education of young men who are not destined to enter the liberal professions may be given as the type of special and technical education. The future is here, provided there be no exaggeration, and that the claims of letters be fairly

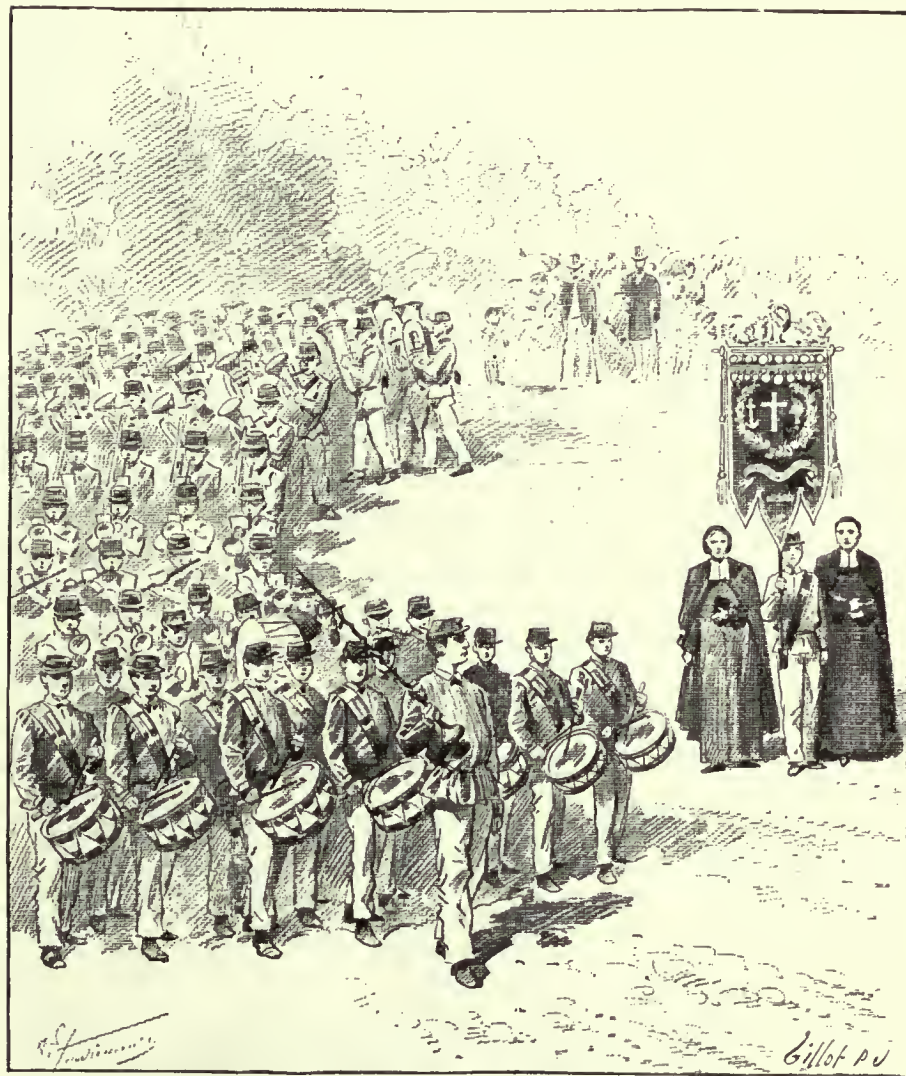
balanced with those of science. Religious instruction suffices in itself to compensate whatever is too material in scientific education. The Brothers have understood this. At Saint Nicholas, the



Saint Nicholas, in Paris. — The gymnasium (p. 372). — Fac-simile of a drawing of Ferdinandus.

work-shop stands close to the school, and this is, if I may say so, a foretaste of the future. The Christian work-shop side by side with the Christian school : all is summed up in this. Social reconciliation, the concord so much desired, the mutual love of all classes, peace, everything must grow up from this union. Enter Saint Nicholas with me. Pause a moment in the gymnastic hall,

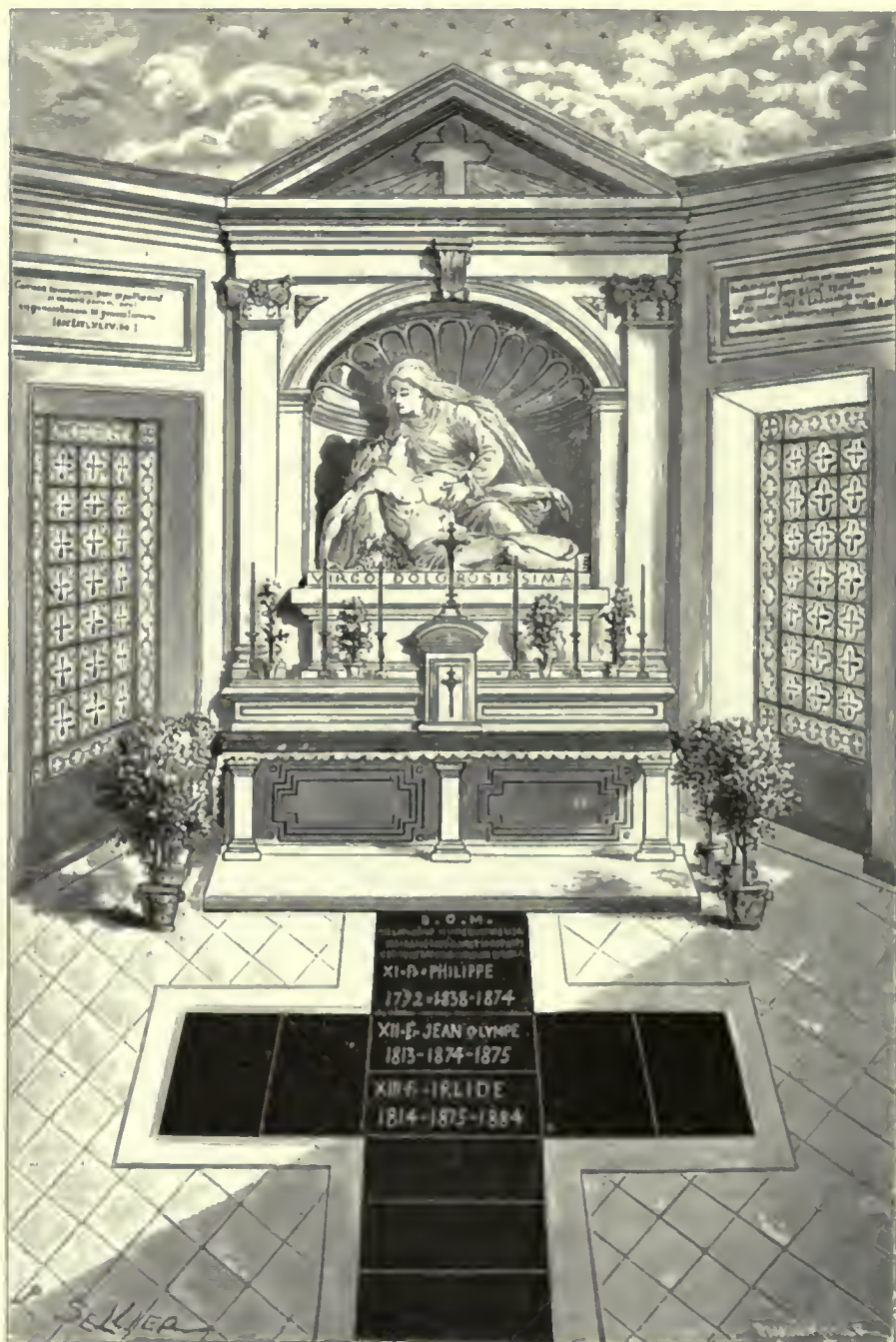
and in the carpenters' work-shop; pass further, and admire the skill with which this piece of carving is done; note the delicacy of this engraving; see how intelligently those boys use the lathe; listen



Saint Nicholas, in Paris. — The band (p. 573). — Fac-simile of a sketch by Ferdinandus.

to that capital band which has already hung gold medals on its victorious banner. Then, wait with us until the recreation bell rings, and see those hundreds of children, shouting at the top of their voices, climbing up those stilts and pushing the big bounding yellow ball. The fun is contagious. But it is time to leave Paris.

We have just now seen where the Brothers work; but where do they rest?



Athès — Mortuary chapel (p. 373). — Drawn by Sellier; engraved by Pannemaker.

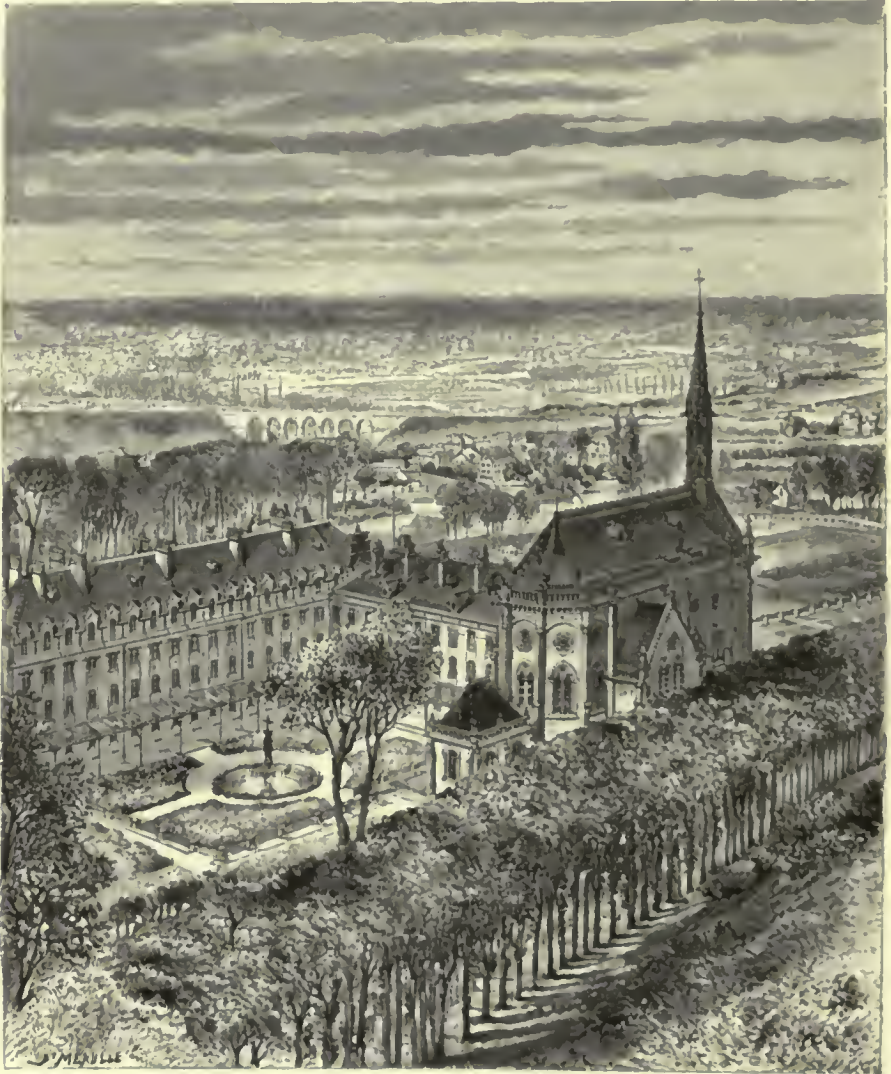
Blessed de la Salle, it may be remembered, had studied all his life this question of the rest and recreation so essential to those engaged in education. Children fatigue, they wear out their teachers, sometimes they kill them. It is necessary to relax the soul and the body, and renew one's strength. One holiday a



Athis. — Lawn and statue of the Sacred Heart (p. 575). Drawn by Sellier; engraved by Sargent.

week, six weeks holidays after the scholastic year : this was what he considered sufficient for these just demands. The holidays may be spent anywhere, but it is at Athis that the Brothers find peace of soul in retreats wisely conducted and frequently renewed. At Athis, they revive their courage for fresh labors and combats, and they do not forget to pray for the soul of Brother Irlide, who procured for them this perfect resting place. But there comes, sooner or

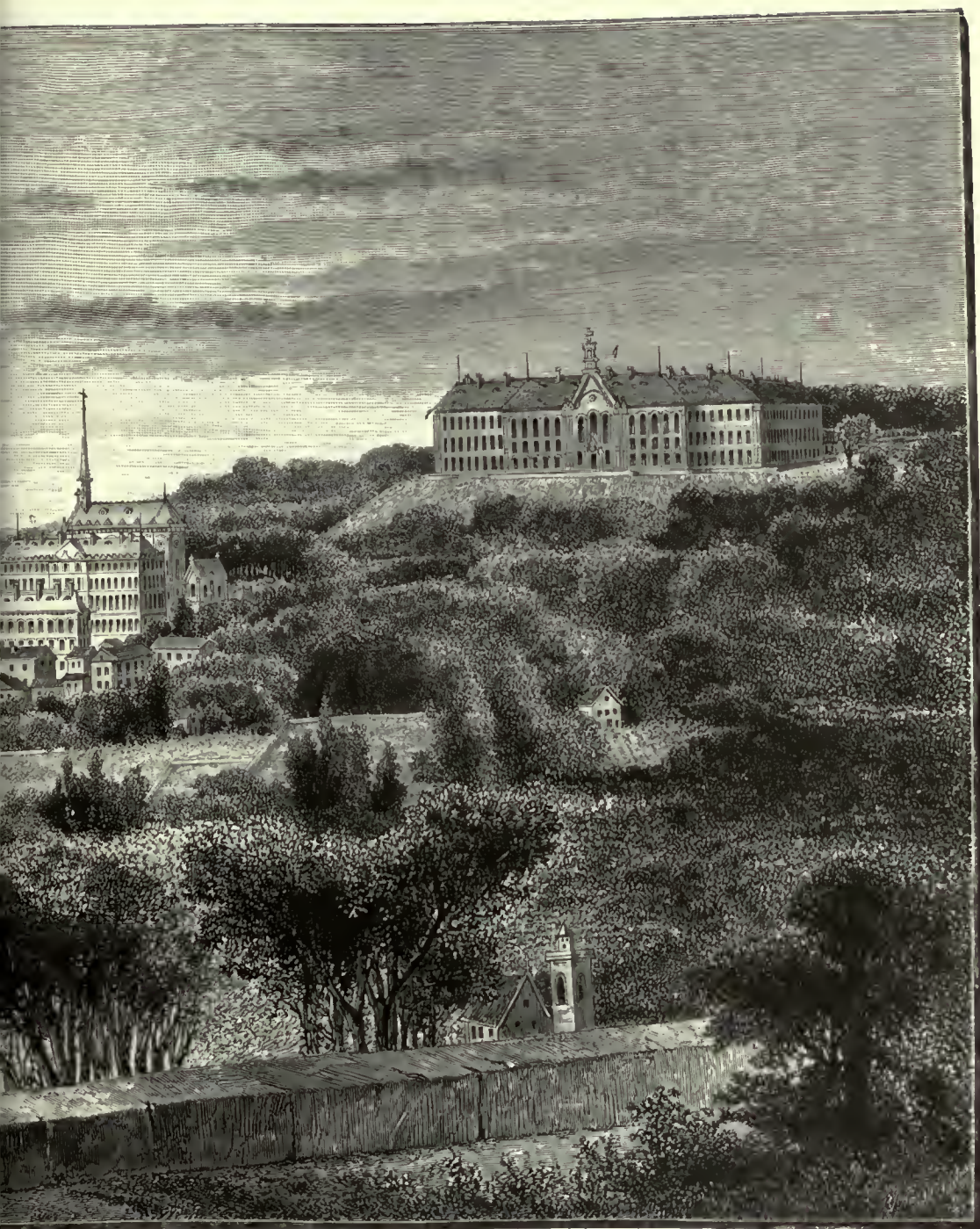
later, a day when the springs are quite worn out, and youth can no longer be renewed. After thirty or forty years of teaching, a Brother is broken down. He has a right to rest, to peace.



*Fleury. — House of retreat for the Brothers. — View of the gardens and the Chapel (p. 376).
Drawn by Sellier; engraved by Méaulle.*

On the heights of Meudon, at Fleury, there is just now being built a vast and commodious abode for these invalids of Christian education. The generosity of an illustrious benefactress had this happy inspiration, and nothing will be finer than the convent







awaiting there sons of Blessed de la Salle who, during their lives,



Fleury. — The avenue near the chapel. — Drawn by Sellier ; engraved by Méaulle.

have taught perhaps ten thousand poor children, and have opened

ten thousand minds to the notion of God and of righteousness. This refuge of apostolic old age could not have been better placed than close to that splendid Orphanage, to which it forms a kind of annex where the merry games of the children will serve constantly to recall to the veterans of the schools the purest joys of their life.

There will be verdure there to soothe wearied eyes, and flowers that old people are so fond of, and broad avenues where the Brothers will talk about their old pupils; there will be above all a chapel where they will converse with God and His holy Mother; there will be God Himself, with all His graces, His light and His peace.

We will cast a last glance at those stately trees, and in a few hours we shall have crossed the distance which separates us from that dear city where Blessed de la Salle died, and which so faithfully honors his memory. Here we are at Rouen! Memories of the great servant of God crowd upon us, but our first pilgrimage is to Saint Yon, then to his tomb, in the chapel of the boarding-school of the Brothers, and lastly to Falguière's fine monument. Rouen was, in truth, predestined to be the city of Blessed de la Salle, for here has been raised the first chapel consecrated to him after his beatification. With what joy will not the Brothers come from every land to pray before that humble altar in the church of Blessed John Baptist de la Salle! There will assuredly be always some black robe mounting guard in this little sanctuary; the tomb will seldom be without a watcher. On we pass to other scenes.

This chapel, at Beauvais, is charming and serves as the centre of the Archconfraternity of Saint Joseph. This house of the Brothers in Blessed de la Salle's native city bears certain resemblance to those "new cities" of the middle ages; it is a little city in the large city of Rheims. Superb also, is the Brothers' house at Lyons, perched half way up the hill of Fourvières, and giving itself the airs of a palace; yet one breathes there the perfume of that neighboring sanctuary which is one of the most popular of Mary's shrines. This dear land of France is so crowded with

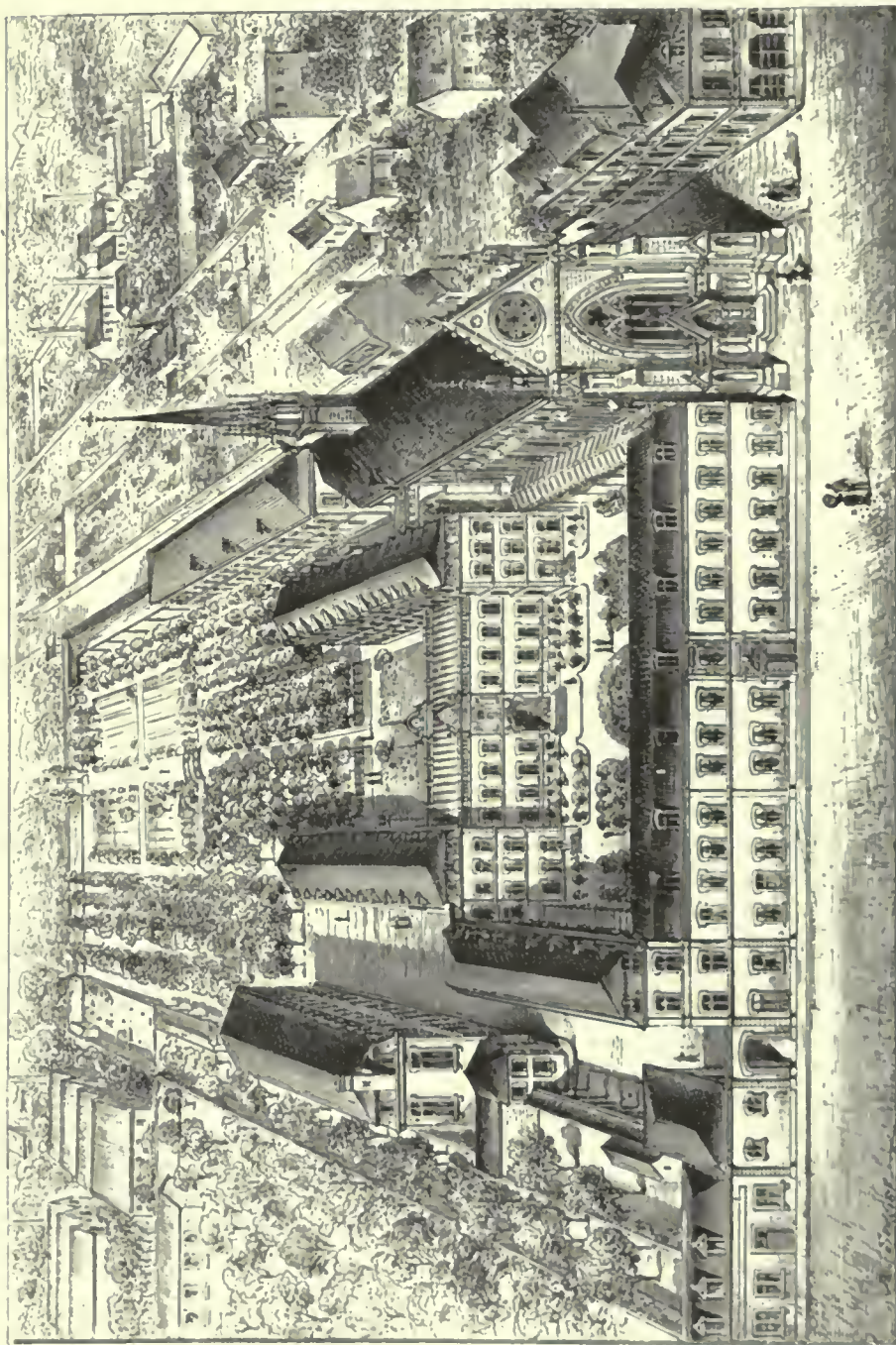
the works of Blessed de la Salle that, to give an accurate description of all, it would be necessary to go all over the country



Beauvais : Boarding-school of Saint Joseph (p. 378). — Chapel which is the centre of the Archconfraternity of Saint Joseph. — Engraved by H. Joffroy.

with an album, and fill it with sketches of the various notable institutions.

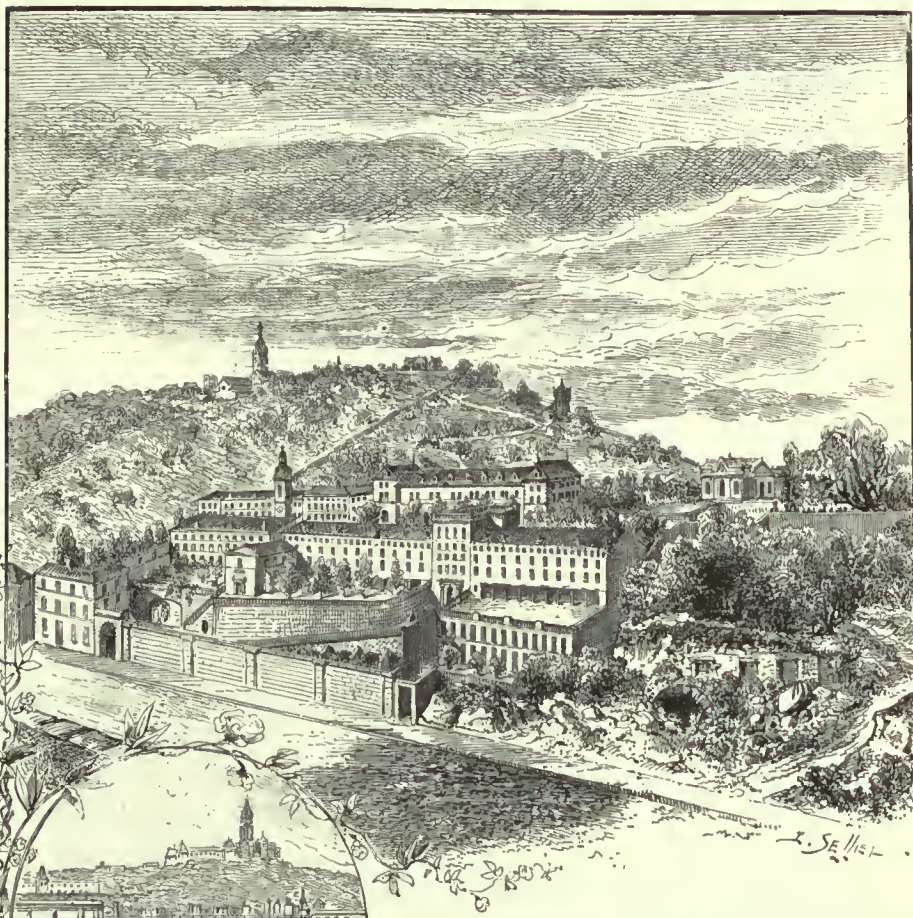
Spain is but a recent conquest of the Brothers; but they have



Rhelms : Boarding-school of the Brothers (p. 376). — Drawn by Bellier; engraved by Tilly.

already struck root there, and the future offers a fair field to their labors in that Catholic land. The noble Spanish nation possesses

resources which have lain dormant, and elements of strength which recent events have brought to light. It will soon become apparent

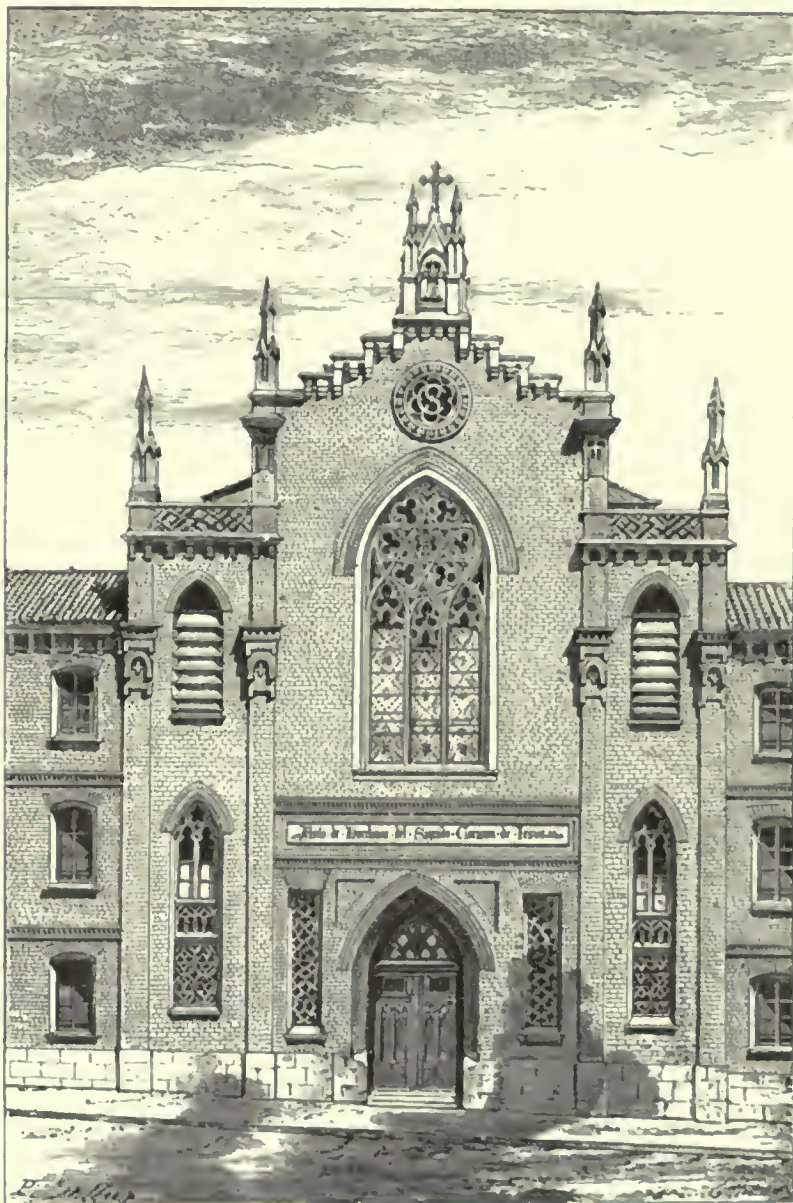


Lyons : House of the Brothers, on the hill of Fourvières (p. 578).
— Drawn by Sellier.

that the Christian Brothers are the masters wanted by Spanish children, and the teachers to whom the profoundly Catholic families of Spain will confide their greatest treasure. Let us, meantime, tarry a moment¹ on the threshold

¹ Spain contains to-day 21 establishments served by 107 Brothers, who are giving a solid Christian education to over 4000 pupils : Madrid has 5 houses; Barcelona, Las Corts, and Cadiz, 2; Bilbao, Valladolid, Anaz, Casa de la Selva, Cobrecas, Isla, Lorca, Castro-Urdiales, Teran, Arenys-do-Mar, Manlleu and Jerez de la Frontera. (See the map, p. 584.)

of that Orphan Asylum of the Sacred Heart, where one still breathes the spirit of its saintly foundress, Ernestine Manuel de



Madrid. — Orphan Asylum of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. — Drawn by Sellier.

Villena, and which comes very near being a master piece of harmonious and delicate architecture. It raises in all who see it a desire that the Brothers may have the opportunity of carrying

to many a distant land a taste for the severe traditions of art. It is permitted to believe that this is one of their missions. As they teach drawing to their pupils in the five parts of the world, they



Doña Ernestine Manuel de Villena, foundress of the Orphan Asylum of the Sacred Heart, died January 27th 1886 (p. 582).
— Engraved by Méaulle.

may also teach them taste, and guard them against the frivolities and vulgarities of modern art.

In London, we see Saint Joseph's College, at Tooting, vast and imposing, into which that of Clapham has grown. There is also

the more modest establishment of Kennington Road, which has given a goodly number of zealous priests to England. It was not in vain that professional schools were founded in the last century by the first sons of Blessed de la Salle. As we have seen, they now flourish in New York as well as in Paris¹, and Manchester has also its industrial school.

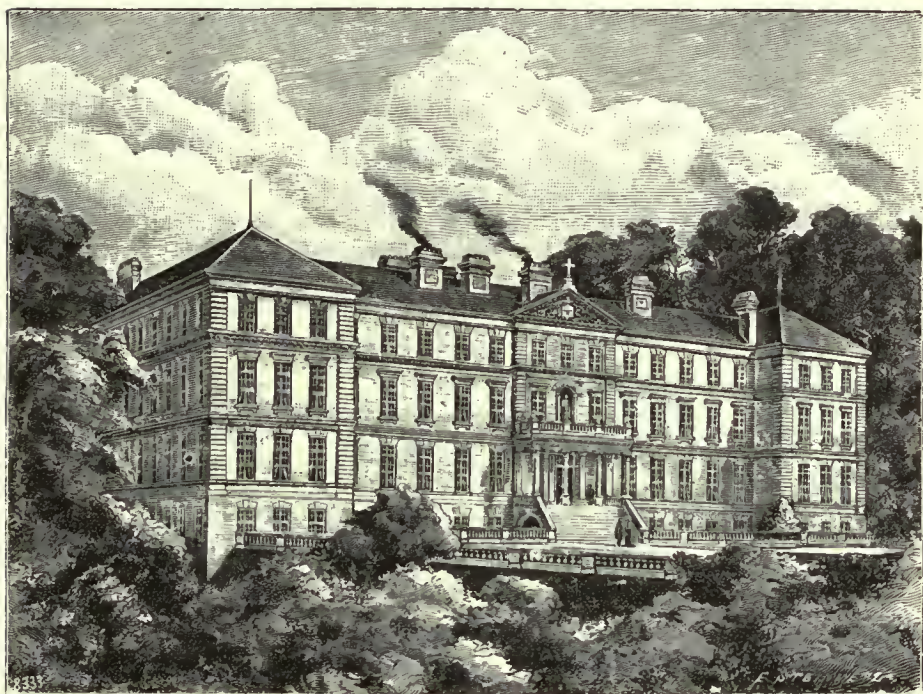


Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Spain (p. 543).

It was at the dawn of the eighteenth century that there arose on one of the hills of Rome, close to the Trinità dei Monti, a house of the Brothers under the direction of that admirable Brother Drolin, so deservedly honored in the Institute. It must not be forgotten that, far from Blessed de la Salle, far from his Brothers, poor and without support, this friend and disciple of the holy founder remained for more than a quarter of a century like the advance

¹ England and Ireland only occupied (in 1887) 76 Brothers, distributed over 7 establishments, and teaching 1166 children. To those quoted above must be added the school of Saint Helier, in the isle of Jersey, and, in Ireland, the four houses of Castletown, Summer-Hill, Kildare and Waterford. We have already shown that there existed in Ireland a Congregation of Brothers formed on the model of Blessed de la Salle's Institute. (See map, p. 586.)

guard of the Congregation. To him is due the merit of having first brought under the notice of the Sovereign Pontiff, and caused him to accept, a specimen of Blessed de la Salle's type of the Christian school. His memory will, therefore, be uppermost in our mind when we visit that French College, first established in the Poli palace, and then transferred to the vast and beautiful Piazza di Spagna¹.



General view of Saint Joseph's college at Tooting, near London (p. 583).

Belgium is too near France not to feel its influence. Forty-eight houses, five hundred and sixty-four Brothers, nearly eighteen thousand pupils! A most Catholic country truly, and which still contains admirable treasures of faith. In order to form a genuine idea of the expansion of the Institute of Blessed de la Salle, we had

¹ Italy has 24 houses served by 318 Brothers, who teach 5932 pupils; Rome, the French college, schools of the Trinità dei Monti, Saint John of Lateran, Transtevere, Saint Saviour, Santà Maria dei Monti, and that Saint Joseph of Artigianelli, which is the Saint Nicholas of Rome. Outside Rome, there are houses in Albano, Benevento, Bolseno, Castel-Gondolfo, Guarino, Nettuno and Porto d'Anzio; in Upper Italy, Turin (2), Genoa, Parma, Piacenza, Susa, Biella (2), Grugliasco and Vercelli. (See map, p. 589.)

better halt a while at Malonne¹. The old pupils of the Brothers assemble there every year for an annual retreat under the direction of their old masters. Malonne, moreover, is the oldest normal school in the kingdom. Then we will recreate ourselves by spending a few days at Carlsbourg, in that fine Agronomical Institute which has anticipated every improvement, and where agricultural

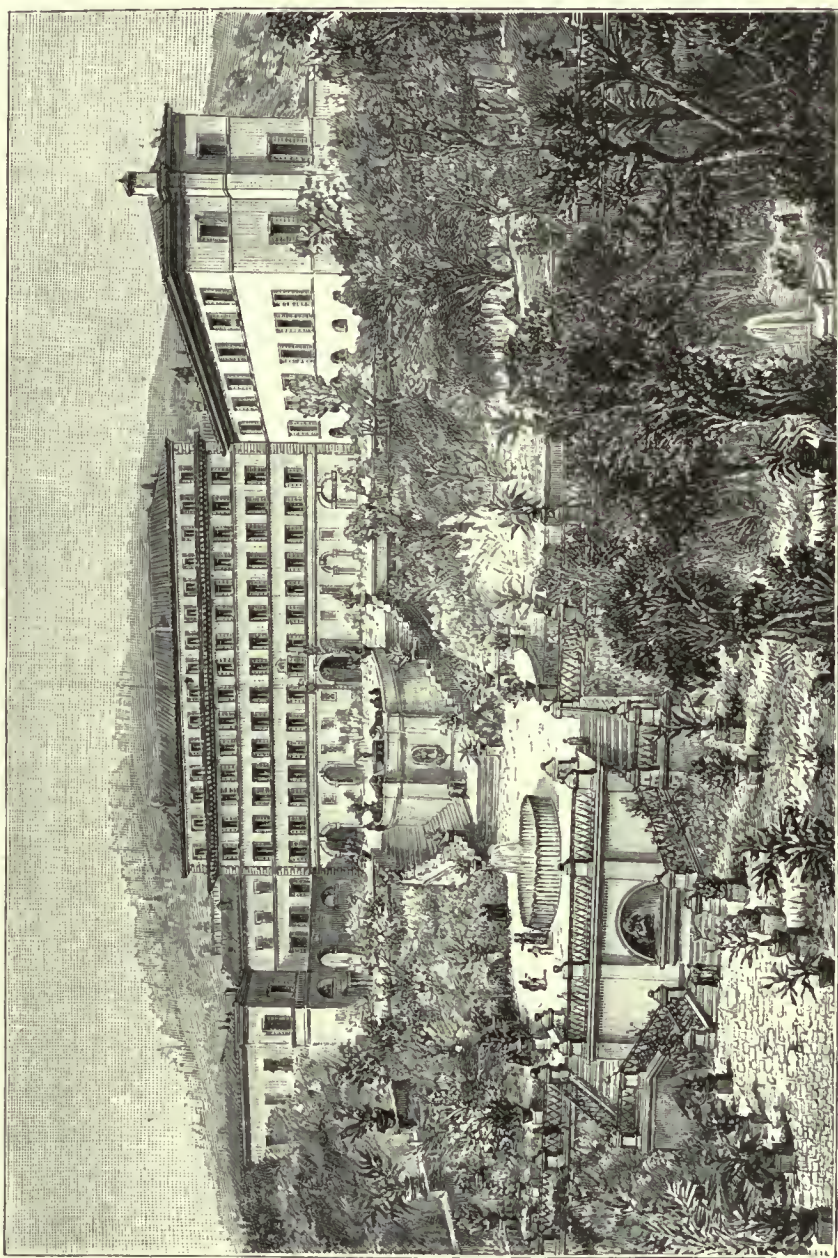


Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in the British Isles (p. 594).

hydraulics and zootechny are taught. There are immense kitchen and botanical gardens, copses, ponds, a hive, all of which serve for the education of the pupils. Carlsbourg is a school of Grignon², progressive and Christian, where the Brothers lead the way back to the woods and fields, a way which our age has almost forgotten.

¹ The other Communities of the Brothers are at Courtrai, Ghent, Alost, Basel, Boom, Saint Trond, Bruxelles, Nivelles, Louvain, Schaerbeek, Tournai, Lessines, Enghien, Ath, Soignies, Gosselies, Charleroy, Chatelet, Binche, Mons, Ghlin, Jemmapes, Frameries, Pâturages, Dour, Peruwelz, Tamines, Gembloux, Namur, Florennes, Chaumont, Dinant, Ciney, Rochefort, Liège, Tilleur, Verviers, Herve, Henri-Chapelle, Aubel, Laroche, Bertrix. (See map, p. 592.) = ² Grignon is the great National Agricultural school of France. It was established in 1826, by M. Bella. In 1848 it became a National Agricultural school.

In Switzerland, the scene changes : Catholics are not free here as in Belgium. The odious and stupid persecution going on in



Novitiate of the Brothers at Albano (p. 585). — General view. — Engraved by Pattier.

that country could not fail to reach the Brothers and their schools. On the 8th of February 1872 the grand Council voted the iniquitous law against religious congregations, and, on the following

11th of August, the Brothers in Geneva were compelled to take leave of their pupils. Bishop Mermillod was there, and addressed these eloquent and avenging words to the persecutors : " Fear nothing from the Catholics; they forgive. When they are in the majority, they will return you good for evil; they will repair



French college in Rome, near the Trinità dei Monti (p. 585). — Inner court. — Engraved by Pattier.

your faults, and bring back to Geneva liberty and honor that you would fain drive away from it¹. ”

In Germany, persecution reigned likewise. There is at the present moment only one Christian school in the whole Empire; that is at Metz. This fact speaks for itself; it is needless to enlarge upon it. Amongst the suppressed houses we must mention Kemperhof, an orphanage entrusted to the sons of Blessed de la Salle.

¹ In Switzerland, the Brothers serve the two houses of Neuchâtel and Allalens : 7 Brothers and 230 pupils. (See map, p. 594.)

The Empress Augusta loved this house and took pleasure in visiting it. More than once she assisted at the examinations, and distributed the prizes to the pupils. But the May laws have put an end to all that; the Kemperhof orphanage disappeared with so many other Catholic institutions, and the Empress Augusta,



The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Italy (pp. 584, 585).

amidst her many overwhelming griefs, has ceased, probably, to think of the orphans and their masters.

We breathe again in Austria, and salute the fine Imperial orphanage of Vienna which the Emperor Francis Joseph visited last year, and did not hesitate to admire aloud. “ I find,” he said, “ a manly bearing in all these children, and their answers have a remarkable degree of precision. Nothing proves the merit of their masters more than this¹. ”

¹ 102 Brothers, distributed through 5 houses, represent the Institute in Austria and Germany. In Austria : Vienna, Pressbaum, Fünfhaus, Strebersdorf. — In Bulgaria, we can only name the house at Sophia, for which the Prince of Battemberg had a particular affection.

Before taking leave of Europe, let us pass by Constantinople, where the Brothers have four houses¹. They may be counted amongst the most useful servants of France and of the Church in the East, and amongst those who contribute to uphold our influence there. Such also is their mission at Erzeroum, Smyrna, Kadi-Keui, Jaffa, Trebizond, Caïffa, Tripoli, and in that dear city of

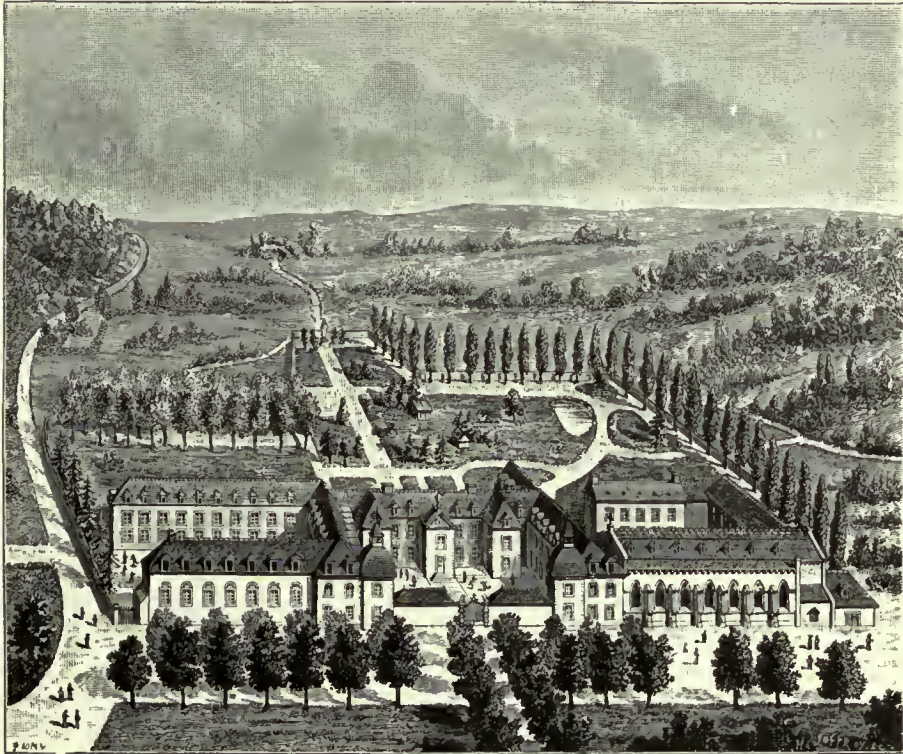


Belgium. — View of the Brothers' establishment in the ancient abbey of Malonne (p. 586). — Engraved by Pattier.

Jerusalem which the noblest part of humanity will always call—
“the holy City.” Like the Franciscans, these sons of Blessed de la Salle mount guard over the holy places. In their primary school, they teach the children of Jerusalem, and in their normal school they prepare the natives to become Catholic teachers themselves. This new sphere of activity is amongst the most valuable they have inaugurated.

¹ In Turkey in Europe, Greece and Roumania, there are 5 houses, 28 Brothers, 707 pupils. In Turkey in Asia, 9 houses, 96 Brothers, 2393 pupils. (See map, p. 597.)

On leaving the Holy Land, we must not fail to pass through Egypt¹, and we will disembark at Alexandria, where the Brothers have the honor of directing that college of Saint Catherine, which received from the French government the privilege of conferring diplomas almost tantamount to those of the University. It is not,



Belgium. — Carlsbourg, ancient castle of the Dukes of Bouillon (p. 586). — Engraved by H. Joffroy.

however, either at Alexandria or Cairo that we will tarry longest, but at Ramleh, where we find both a novitiate and a boarding-school. This novitiate is an advance post of Christianity in the land of Islamism, and is, therefore, especially dear to us. But we cannot bid farewell to Egypt without having seen the Suez canal, and we can rest at Port-Saïd, in that unpretending Christian school which the canal Company will, we have no doubt, enlarge and encourage. This school is a light held up in a land traversed

¹ 5 houses, 120 Brothers, 1 715 pupils. (See map, p. 600.)

in every direction by dangerous influences, by Protestantism, and modern materialism.

At Tunis, at La Goulette¹, the Brothers have a school, and there, as elsewhere, they honor France and cause her to be loved. If from Tunis we pass on to the most important of our colonies,



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Belgium * (pp. 585, 586).

we find them numerous and flourishing, at Algiers and especially at El-Biar, where they have a novitiate and a boarding-school, likely to render great services in the future³.

In almost all the countries we have passed through, the Brothers of the Christian schools are fighting against Islamism, which

¹ In Algiers, 9 houses, 92 Brothers, 1,639 pupils. In Tunis, 2 houses, 18 Brothers, 689 pupils, and following. (See map, p. 601.) = ² See farther on map (p. 594) of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg: 14 establishments, and following. = ³ In Algiers the Brothers are also settled at Blida, Oran, Tlemcen, Sidi-Bel-Abbès, Constantine and Philippeville.

is one of the most formidable agencies of error and of evil. But in India they have a far more terrible enemy to combat, this is Buddhism. The much vaunted traits of so called resemblance between this creed and Christianity have been shown up in their



Bishop Mermillod (p. 588). — Engraved by Napier.

true light; they are very easily explained away. Buddhism is the more hostile to the Catholic apostleship because of this pretended likeness to the true Church. The battle is a hard one, and the Brothers are in the advance guard. The house at Rangoon, in Burmah, is well worth the trouble of a visit, and Christian travel-

lers would do well to make a short stay there for the purpose.



Institute of the schools of the Christian Brothers in Switzerland (pp. 587, 588).

Artists would seize many a rapid sketch of those Burmese types



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Austria (p. 589).

that deserve to be better known. It is Burmah christianized, and, let us say it boldly, civilized¹.

¹ In India and China, the Institute possesses 9 establishments, that are served by 76 Brothers and count 2477 pupils : Rangoon, Moulmein, Poulou-Pinang, Singapore, in the English Indies ; — Colombo (2) and Negombo, in the island of Ceylon ; — Hong-Kong in China. At Hong-Kong there is a college and an orphanage.

The Brothers have so far barely alighted on the vast Chinese Empire; but this is to be their conquest in the future, a future not far off, we believe. China cannot long continue to be exclusive;



H. M. Francis II., Emperor of Austria (p. 589). — Engraved by Méaulle, from a photo-engraving from Vienna.

thousands of unknown martyrs who died there for Jesus Christ are praying for the coming of His kingdom amongst her people. Their prayers will avail far more than a disciplined army, and the Brothers will be found among the standard-bearers of that new

kingdom. But our survey is not yet ended. Madagascar is in our day a sort of little world where the Brothers were not afraid of encamping. They have houses at Tamatave, Tananarive, and Fianarantsoa. The natives of Madagascar present many new and strange types. We find the Brothers again at Saint Denis, in the island of the Reunion¹, and at Curepipe in the Mauritius².



Erzeroum. — Types of Armenian scholars (p. 890). — Drawn by P. Sellier.

We have travelled all over the old continent; let us now turn our steps to the new one.

It is, no doubt, permitted to challenge the bold and somewhat rash views of a young writer of our day who, in an article which made a great sensation, pointed to America as the country whose

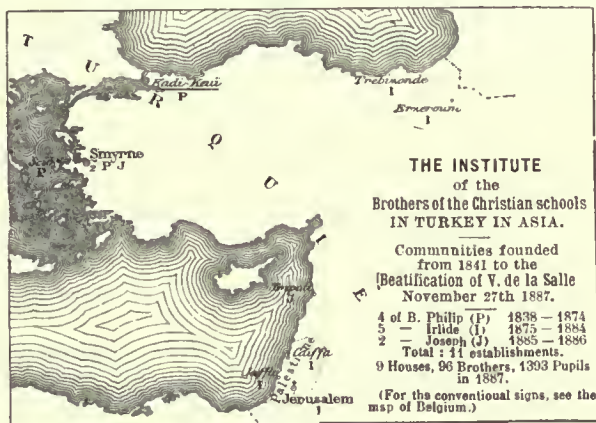
¹ There are also Brothers at Sainte Marie, Saint André, Saint Philip, Saint Joseph, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Salazie and Entre-Deux. = ² In these three islands, 101 Brothers and 13 establishments.

soil was most favorable to the future development of the Catholic Church. We cannot believe that God has condemned to sterility



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools of Turkey in Europe, Greece and Roumania (p. 590).

and impotence the entire old world, and particularly France. It is certain, nevertheless, that Catholicity is expanding in America with incomparable fertility. I saw only the other day a beautiful



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools of Turkey in Asia (p. 590).

book containing the portraits of our Bishops across the Atlantic. They all have broad foreheads, eyes sparkling with intelligence, and a dignity tempered with kindness. Learned men and Saints,

and, withal, wearing an air of youth like men who look to the future with the trust of conquerors. All our Catholic institutions over there resemble transplanted trees that are striking healthy roots in a soil providentially prepared to receive them. Everything succeeds, everything prospers, everything lives. Innumerable churches, convents and schools are transforming the face



Jerusalem. — House of the Brothers (p. 390). — Drawn by A. Brus.

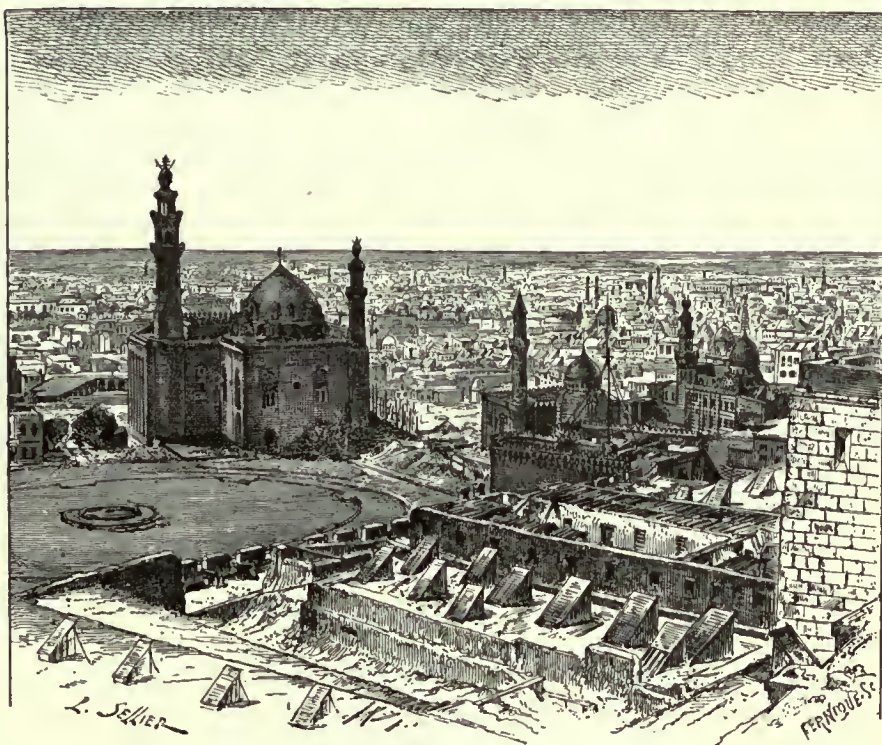
of the land. It is a consoling and touching spectacle, and as Catholics we heartily congratulate our generous American fellow-Catholics.

Amongst a people so fond of science and so respectful towards faith, the Institute¹ of the Christian Brothers was sure to meet with cordial and kindly welcome; but where could they be better received than in that dear Canada, which has preserved, so to speak, the French stamp? The Congregation of Blessed de la Salle developed more rapidly here than in any other part of Amer-

¹ The Institute has in America 118 establishments served by 1151 Brothers.

ica¹. At Montreal, there are no less than a hundred and twenty Brothers divided amongst eight establishments, and in Quebec we reckon fifty-five Brothers in four houses². These statistics augur well for the future.

It is not, indeed, surprising that such an Institution should have prospered so well on the Catholic soil of Canada; but in the



Cairo (p. 591). — Position of Pompey's Column. — Drawn by Sellier.

United States the conditions were not the same; the soil here was, in fact, antagonistic to its growth. The United States are, as we know, the very hotbed of religious sects, which may be reckoned there by hundreds. There are dangerous sects, and ridiculous ones, and Protestantism, some fifty years ago, might have passed for the dominant religion of this divided population. But how

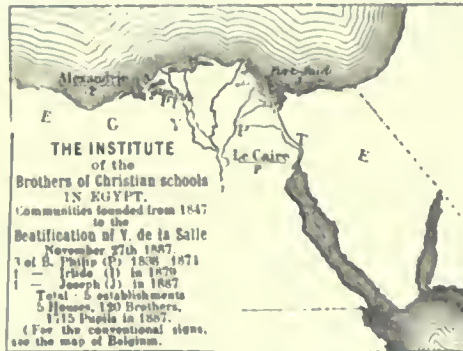
¹ Canada has 33 houses and 299 Brothers. = ² The other establishments in Canada are : Ottawa (3, and 25 Brothers), Trois-Rivières, the Baie-du-Febvre, Nicolet, Saint Grégoire, Hull, l'Islet, Halifax, Saint Jean-Dorchester, Longueuil, Saint Mary, Yamachiche, Lachine, Kingston, Toronto (2), Saint Catherine, Fraserville, Hochelaga.

changed are the times! Catholicism, like a beautiful flower, is



Hamieh. — Boarding-school and Novitiate of the Brothers (p. 501). — Drawn by A. Brun.

opening in the sunshine, and spreading apace. In the entire

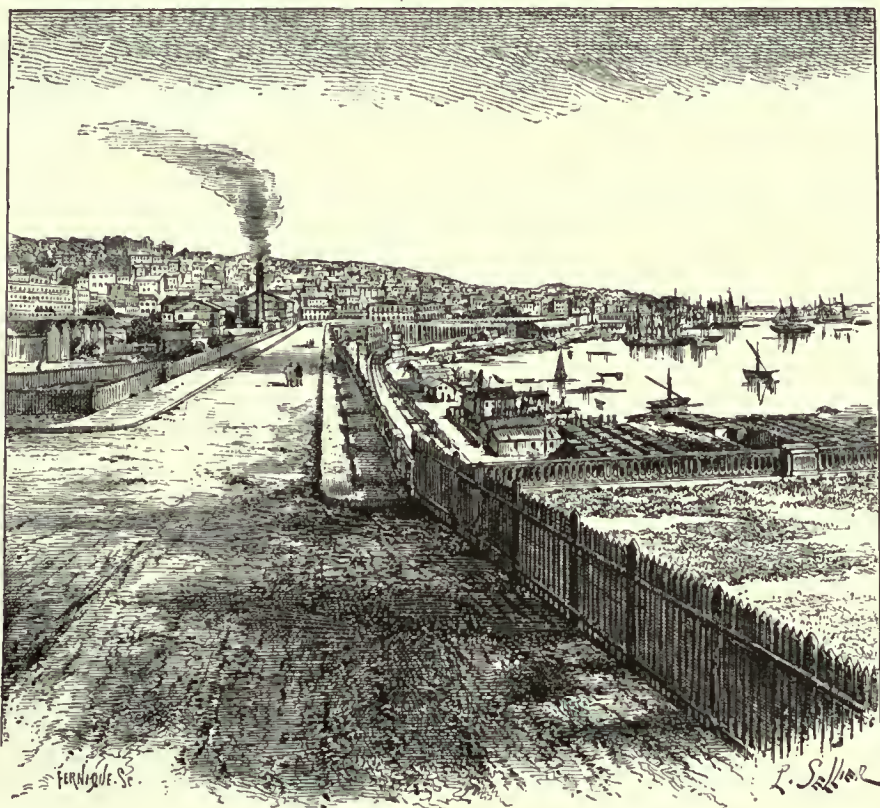


Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Egypt (p. 501).

district of Saint Louis¹, we still find a population of French origin,

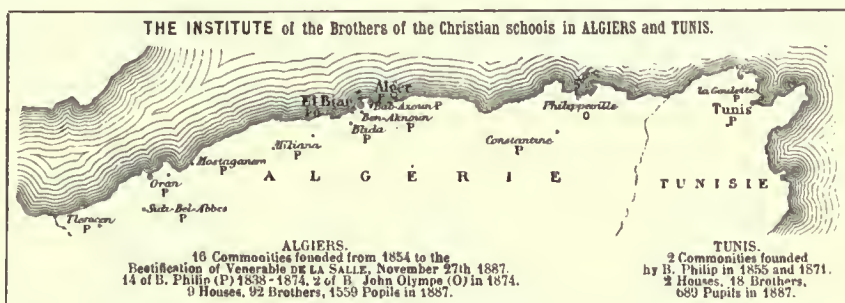
¹ District of Saint Louis : Saint Louis (4), Chicago (2), Saint Joseph (2), Fechanville, Valencoe, Memphis, New-Orleans, Saint Paul, Bernanillo, Santa-Fe.

and we are not surprised to see one hundred and seventy five



Algiers. — View taken from the Bah-Azouo Gate (p. 592). — Drawn by Sellier.

Brothers at work there, distributed over fifteen Houses. But what



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Algiers and Tunis (p. 592).

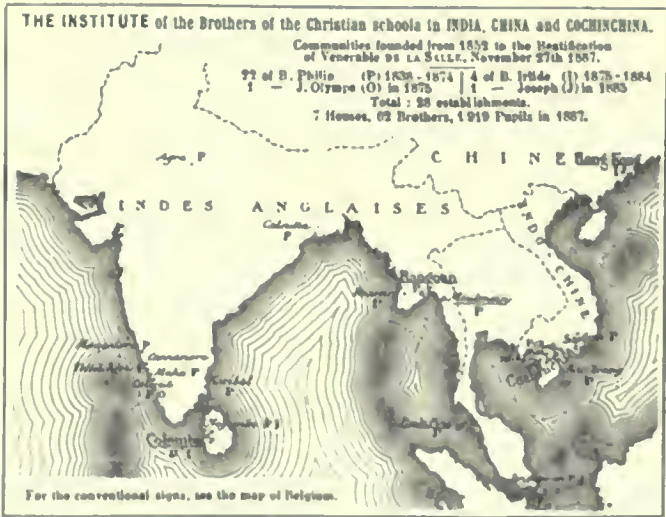
shall we say of the district of New York¹ with its thirty establish-

¹ District of New York : New York (8), Albany (2), Troy (2), Utica (2), Westchester (2), Amawalk, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicopee, Detroit, Manchester, Manhattanville, Melrose, Newburgh, Peekskill, Providence, Syracuse, Yonkers; Halifax, in Canada.

ments and its three hundred and forty-two Brothers, and of Baltimore with its hundred and fifty-five Religious and nineteen



English possessions in India : Burmah. — General view of Rangoon (p. 394). — Drawn by Sellier.



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in India, China and Cochinchina (p. 394).

schools? Yet all these swarms have come from the lowly hive of Blessed de la Salle.

Catholic institutions have everywhere the same essential characteristics; but their external features may, and do vary according to climate and country. A school in New York will not be the



English possessions in India : Burmah. — Rangoon. — Boarding-school of the Brothers (p. 594). — Drawn by Sellier.

same as a school in Paris, and the little American boy of seven will not be the same type as the little Parisian of the same age. We must be prepared for these differences, and study the Protectory of New York or Manhattan college, as we do Saint Nicholas or Passy.

The Protectory would require a study all to itself, and nothing is more touching than the history of its rise and early years. We have under our eyes a record where the story is told with the

simplicity of Catholic eloquence, and we cannot do better than quote from it. "Before 1862, Catholics were seriously considering in New York the problem of how to react against the proselytism of Protestant societies, which were every day carrying off troops of poor destitute Catholic children, and educating them as Protes-



English possessions in India. — Burmese types : scholars at Rangoon (p. 591).
— Drawn by SELLER from local photographs.

tants. The better to ensure the success of their work, these sectarians changed the names of the children, and sent them away after a while to the Far West. This lamentable state of things was a source of constant and deep anxiety to Brother Patrick, then President of Manhattan College, now Assistant of the Superior general, and of the illustrious Doctor Silliman Ives, once a Protestant Bishop, and afterwards a faithful and valiant son of the Roman Church. On the occasion of administering Confirmation

in the parish-church of Manhattanville, several of the leading Catholic citizens of New York were invited to meet Archbishop Hughes at the pastoral residence.

The question was there discussed at length. The moment Brother Patrick promised to give Brothers to manage the projected institution, His Grace exclaimed : “ In God’s name, gentlemen,



China. — Island of Hong-Kong. — The Brothers' school (p. 595). — Drawn by Léon Labbé; engraved by Napier.

let us begin the work! ” Forthwith all those present subscribed for relatively large sums, and the Catholic Protectory sprang into existence. Its beginnings were humble, but God’s blessing was upon them. The institution grew rapidly, and, at the present day, contains two thousand children.

As soon as these waifs and strays are received into the house, the first care of the Brothers is to prepare them for their first Communion. They are taught all that is necessary to make them honest tradesmen or clever mechanics. Twenty different trades

are taught in the establishment, and the children choose whichever they are best suited for by taste and natural aptitude. There is a tailoring work-shop, one for carpenters, a shoe-making shop, and above all a printing office which occupies a great number of young workers, and does very creditable work.

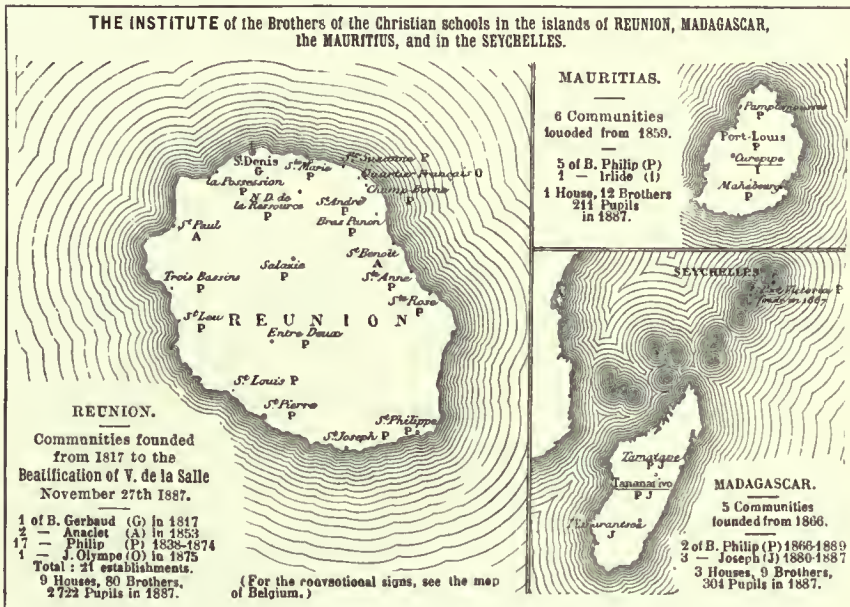
“ The city of New York pays for the children belonging to it. From time to time, the State has made appropriations for the



Madagascar : Tamatave, view of the sea (p. 596). — Drawn by Sellier.

purpose of keeping up the house and defraying such improvements and repairs as are found to be necessary. Places are procured for the most competent of the young workmen when they have reached a certain age. A large majority of these youths have turned out well, and are now useful citizens of the Republic. The good thus done increases every day, and is incalculable. Already has the Protectory snatched from misery and physical and moral ruin tens of thousands of souls.” This Protectory naturally leads us to record the fact that, from the moment of the introduction of the Brothers into his diocese, Archbishop Hughes was their fast friend and

protector. But, besides the Protectory, we should mention other institutions of a different character, but no less prosperous. We should, above all, mention the Brothers' boarding-schools. Those of Saint Louis, San Francisco, Baltimore, and Memphis merit special notice. We should not forget, in order to see things in their true light, that boarding-schools in these countries have a particular aim and object, and consequently a particular organ-



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in the Island of Reunion, Madagascar, Mauritius, and in the Seychelles (p. 596).

ization. What the new world wants, above all, is a native clergy, both numerous and devoted. The Brothers in their colleges are preparing this element, so necessary in the life of a Catholic country. Let us take, for instance, Manhattan college—in the space of twenty-three years, it has given over one hundred and forty priests to the Church.

We have just mentioned Baltimore; it is the chief town of a district that possesses nineteen houses and occupies one hundred and fifty-five Brothers¹. In Philadelphia, fifty-one Brothers are

¹ District of Baltimore : Baltimore, Ammendale, Ellicott-City, in Maryland; Jersey-City, Hoboken, Newark, Paterson, in the State of New-Jersey; Washington, Norfolk, Philadelphia.

laboring in seven establishments whose aim is the salvation of souls. The district of San Francisco is less favored, having only eighty-six Religious and nine foundations; but it is a comparatively new district and has a bright future, and the sons of Blessed



Island of Reunion : View of Saint Pierre (p. 396). — Drawn by Sellier.

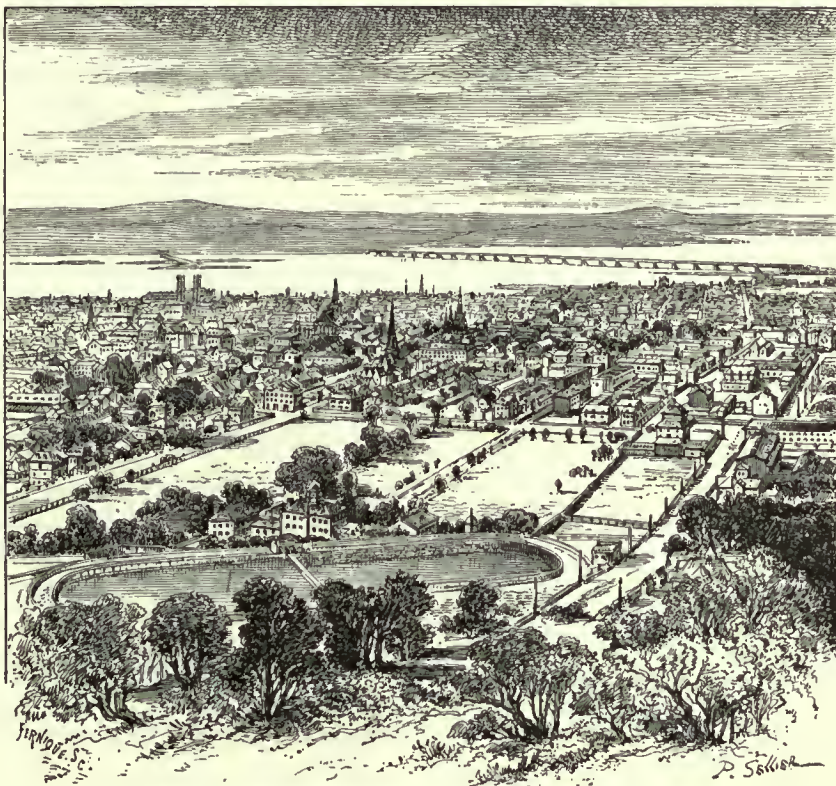
de la Salle will in this land of golden promise, great energy and generous hearts, find a vast and a fair field, for their noble task, which is protected from above by St Francis¹.

All honor then to youthful America, who so nobly welcomed the Brothers of the Christian schools, and who, full of trust in the

¹ San-Francisco (3), Oakland (2), Temescal, Martinez. Sacramento, in California; Portland, in Oregon.

future, is perhaps destined to preserve to the Catholic Church her independence, her supremacy and her glory!

In South America¹, which is all Catholic, the clergy long sufficed for the education of the people, and the Brothers seemed to be less needed there. The generous Spanish blood flows in the veins of



Canada. — Montreal and the Saint Lawrence (p. 598). — Drawn by Selier.

these proud colons, long since independent. They want a few men like that noble Garcia Moreno, who, deeply penetrated with the beauty of Catholic dogma, aimed at creating a truly Christian republic, uncompromising, pure and beautiful, *sine ruga et macula*. We know what a tragical end awaited this grand Christian. Success, however, is not happily the only thing which inspires the

¹ There are 94 Brothers in 12 houses. — At Equador, there are 73 Brothers and 9 establishments. (Quito, 28 Brothers and 2 houses; Guayaquil, Guano, Guaranda, Latacunga, Loja, Riobamba, Ambato.) In Chili, 19 Brothers and 3 establishments (2 at Santiago and 1 at Valparaiso).

admiration of mankind, and the name of Garcia Moreno will always remain dear to noble souls and Catholic hearts, and the Brothers, whose friend he was, will never forget him.

Our tour round the world is finished; but our readers may, like ourselves, feel the need of a rapid and clear recapitulation. We will present it to them in the philosophical order.



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in Canada (p. 200).

How do these 14,849 Brothers or novices who compose the Institute at the present time, employ their day? Have they all one and the same function, and do they, as their name would lead us to infer, occupy themselves solely with Christian schools? We have seen enough of them to be convinced of the contrary.

The primary schools are undoubtedly still the chief mission of the Brothers, and they are likely to remain so; for the sons of Blessed de la Salle are masters in that specialty, and are moreover too proud of their mission to the poor and the lowly to change it

for any other; but, while keeping faithfully to the models and lessons of their holy founder, they have been able to adapt to the present age the scholastic type that he created. They have excellent school-books. They keep up with all the modern discoveries and all the new methods. What will never change in their schools is the general method, that simultaneous system of teaching which



Canada : Montreal. — Saint Joseph's school (p. 599). — Drawn by De Bellée.

is being made constantly more complete; what will change still less is the Christian spirit which pervades the whole Institute, and animates every part of its organisation. The Brothers do not profess the great modern heresy : they do not sacrifice education to instruction. To form Christians, to form men, such is their great aim.

It is a curious name enough, when one comes to analyse it, that of Superior primary schools; but the name exists, and we may let it stand. It undoubtedly answers to a need and a reality. There is a large section of persons who could not afford the luxury of

having their children taught Greek and Latin. Whilst illustrious religious orders are devoting themselves to the education of the governing classes, the Brothers devote themselves to that of the governed classes. Their commercial education is acknowledged to



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in the United States (pp. 607-608).

be first-rate, and their Superior schools of Saint Roch, Saint Clotilde and the Avenue Saint Ouen (in Paris) are proofs of this. And yet this is only a beginning, and before twenty years these foundations will need to be multiplied tenfold. But there is no professional education worthy of the name if practice does not

complete theory in it. In a word, the school is not sufficient; it needs to be supplemented by the work-shop. The disciples of



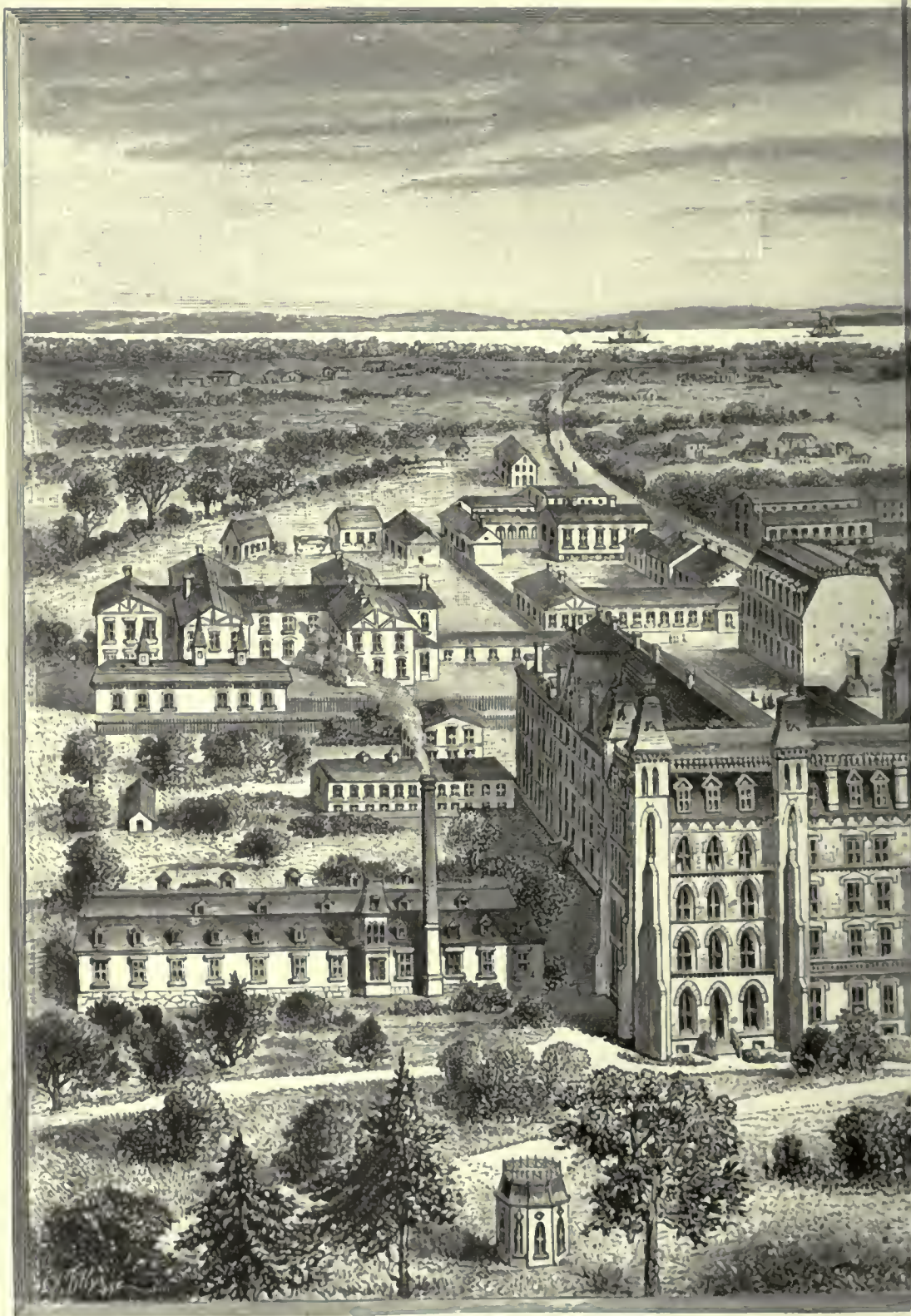
Dr. Hughes, Archbishop of New-York (p. 607). — Engraved by Méaulle.

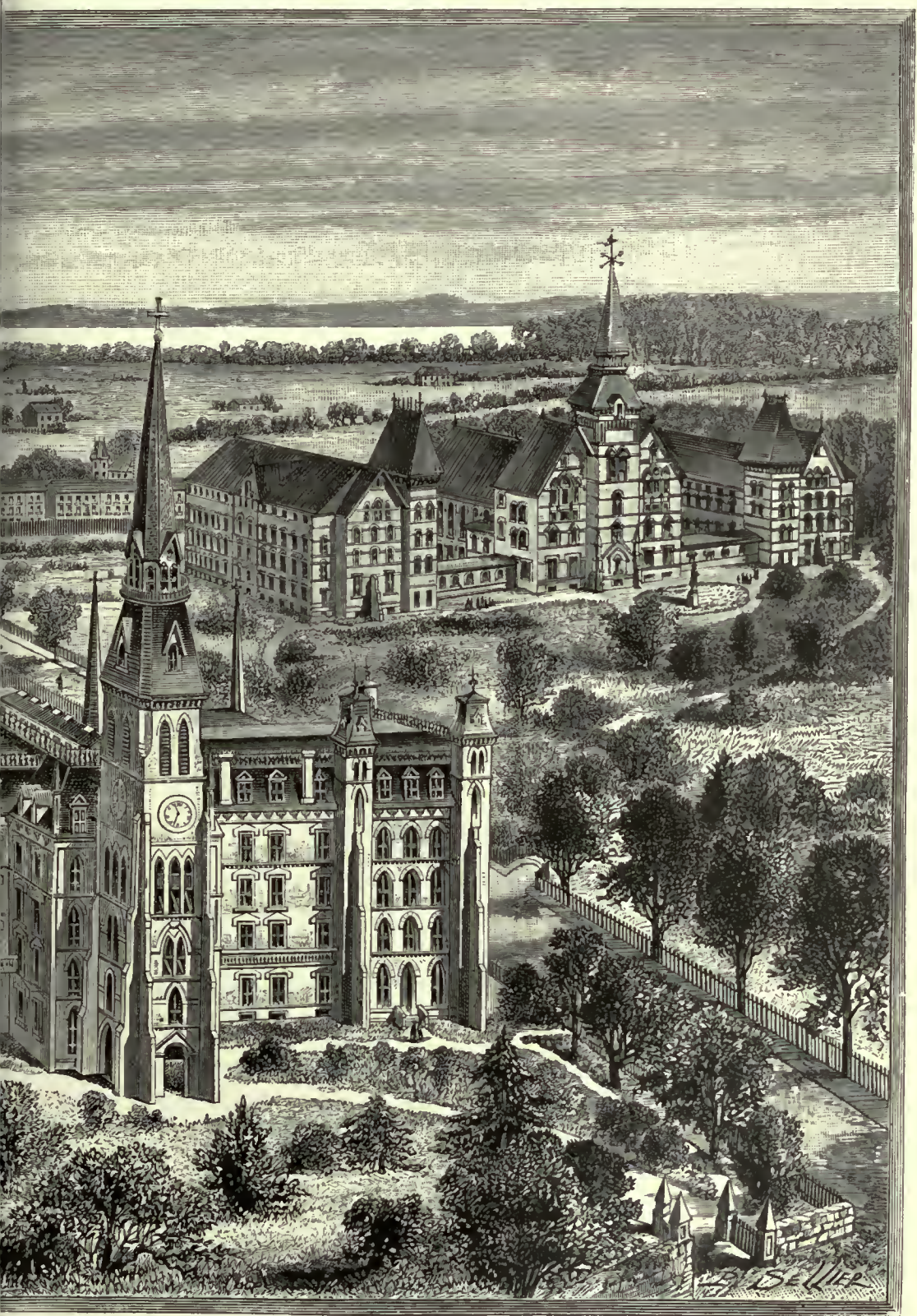
Blessed de la Salle understood this, and they inaugurated the creation of types entirely modern. At Lyons, the De la Salle school includes a fine scientific laboratory, with work-shops for adjusting,

forging, weaving, joining and modelling. Saint Nicholas, in Paris, and another professional school at Saint Étienne, are equally well organized, and from these the pupils are taken in sections to a great central manufactory where useful trades of the most opposite kinds are carried on. In Rome there is the *Artigianelli*, an Italian Saint Nicholas; there is the *Industrial School* in Manchester, and in New-York the *Protectory*.

We hear loud complaints of the alarming encroachments of trade, and the way the rural districts are being deserted by the laborers. The Brothers, largely recruited themselves from the people, could not overlook in their wide-reaching instruction that art of agriculture which is the life of the people. The time seems come when there are to be no more peasants; they have lost the love of labor, the noble labor of the soil; they despise the plough, and farmers now bring up their sons to be teachers and tradesmen. The Institute of Blessed de la Salle has protested forcibly against this evil by creating a number of agricultural orphanages, the Agricultural Schools of Igny and of Vaujours, the famous agricultural Institute of Beauvais and the Agronomical Institute of Carlsbourg in Belgium. A similar school is being started near Philadelphia. Let us hope that they will work on successfully in the same direction, and that the Brothers will end by bringing back the country people to the love of the country.

The boarding-schools are the subject of violent controversies in these days, but it is pretty generally admitted that, at least for a certain class of children and lads, they are absolutely necessary. Blessed de la Salle was of this opinion, and opened a boarding-school whose chief object was the training of masters for the villages. In 1688, he opened a second for the same purpose in the parish of Saint Hippolyte, and a few years later a third for the young Irish boys that James II. had confided to him. But this is not all. Blessed de la Salle founded the celebrated boarding-school of Saint Yon, which was the model of so many others, and where the pupils were instructed in all that belongs to trade, finance, the army, architecture and mathematics. The successors of the great







servant of God have walked in the way he marked out for them, and have developed the work he so well began. In 1790, the Brothers were directing fifteen boarding-schools. In these days, when more than ever it has become necessary to make "secondary special" education superior to all others, the Brothers have been



Brother Facile, Assistant for America. — Engraved by Meaulle.

compelled to enlarge their first programme. We may go farther, and say that this secondary special education is really their discovery, and that their house at Passy was the first model of it in our age. Their adversaries are obliged to render them this justice, and I have never met one of them who did not speak of Passy with admiration. Here young men are prepared for that Central school into which it is so hard to gain admittance, whose programme is so severe and whose spirit is so material. If, as we are persuaded,

they send Christians into it, they are rendering a great service to their age, which stands so much in need of a faith and an ideal. Pope Leo XIII. earnestly recommends to all Catholics the union of science and faith : the Brothers anticipated this counsel.

To form schools is all very well; but it is necessary also to form

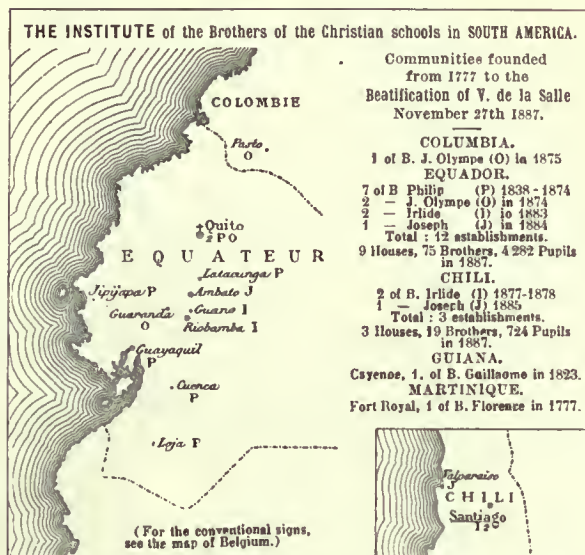


Republic of Ecuador. — View of Quito (p. 609). — Drawn by Selliar.

the future masters of a young generation threatened with so many perils. This is what is being actively carried out in the novitiates of the Congregation, every day and all day long; and here we ought, perhaps, were not our space measured, to speak at some length of that admirable work which merits above all others to bear the name of the holy founder. This “work of the Venerable,” which is now the work of “the Blessed,” has no other aim than the creation and support of these preparatory novitiates where lads of thirteen or fourteen are prepared for the Brotherhood by

three years' study and pious training. These dear preparatory novitiates, of which there are thirty-two at the present time, only sheltered 933 little novices in 1882; but God blessed them visibly, and in 1887 these neophytes numbered 2,429. It is the nursery of the Institute.

This forming of subjects for their order could not satisfy the Christian ambition of the Brothers, who formerly directed in



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in South America (pp. 609, 610).

France several Normal schools of the State, and who still direct several similar establishments in Belgium. Every year, their old pupils who have become masters assemble at Carlsbourg or Malonne to make a retreat, and see their former masters whom they love. They come away better and happier.

When the Viscount de Melun, in 1843, first conceived the plan of his Young Men's Associations, it was the Brothers he asked to manage that little world of apprentices and young workmen whose souls he wanted to save. It is therefore to the Brothers that we owe the model of these Patronages which are the necessary supplement of the Christian schools. No undertaking seemed more difficult to accomplish, and none ever succeeded better. The Parisian

apprentice is apt to be noisy, insolent, undisciplined; the Brothers have tamed and humanized him. And what they begin in their patronages, they continue in those Societies of perseverance which



García Moreno, late President of the Republic of Ecuador (pp. 609, 610). — Engraved by Méaulle.

M. de Melun founded “ against ignorance, vice and loneliness. ” In all these various foundations we find that spirit of piety, which the Brothers have the gift of communicating, as well as that loyalty

and cheerfulness of pious souls, which are characteristic of all their works.

Don Francisco Escrivá

Quito, mayo 12 del 873.

Mi querido Hermano

*Con vista de la citada de V. he
ordenado que continúe la obra del
local, á cuyo efecto va la orden á
la Intendencia p.^a los gastos. Agra-
desco á V. el interés q. manifiesta por
operar mas espacio á los alumnos
y tiene á los mas que podrá ser-
vir.*

Sei de V. apunto S. S.

G. García Moreno

García Moreno (pp. 609, 610). — Fac-simile of a letter addressed to the Director of the Brothers of Quito¹.

¹ Translation of the letter :

My dear Brother : On receiving your estimable letter, I ordered the continuation of the works of your school. To this effect, I am now sending an order to the governor concerning all the expenses to be incurred in the matter. I thank you for the interest you take in the enlarging of the place. This improvement will give more space to your present pupils and to the larger number you will be able to receive in the future. I am your affectionate servant,

GABRIEL-GARCIA MORENO.

same modest and imposing virtues. The club of the Francs-Bourgeois is known everywhere, and was long the object of the active care of the present Superior.



Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools in the world from its origin to the beatification of Blessed John Baptist de la Salle (June 24th 1680 — November 27th 1887).

Such are the principal functions which the Institute is carrying on at the present day. Nor are these the only ones. The Brothers are to be seen conducting the choirs of the great parishes in Paris, providing acolytes for them, and drilling those troops of

turbulent and giddy children. In Rome the prefect of the singing-school of San Salvatore in Laura is a Brother. At Ghent, they have their Artistic Club, and in Paris their excellent Family House, founded in 1854 in the old Rue des Francs-Bourgeois at the Marais, and which, for the last twenty years, occupies one of the finest mansions of the Rue Saint Antoine. At Besançon and Saint Étienne the Brothers have Deaf-and-Dumb schools, and while some of them are teaching the little choir-boys to sing, others strive to compensate the poor afflicted ones by giving them a language of their own, drawing out their intelligence and cultivating their souls.

The works of the Brothers are innumerable, and they do not despair of creating others. Their hope surpasses even their activity.

We have several times had occasion to say that what the sons of Blessed de la Salle aimed at above all was to train up Christians. In order to compass this chief object of their institute, and preserve the fruits of Christian education, they have recourse to all the resources of Catholic works.

In their schools, they encourage the associations of the Propagation of the Faith, of the Holy Childhood and Peter's Pence. They multiply Societies of the Blessed Virgin; they spread the Apostolate of prayer.

They have Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul in their boarding-schools, and, for souls more advanced in holiness, Associations for the Monthly Communion of reparation.

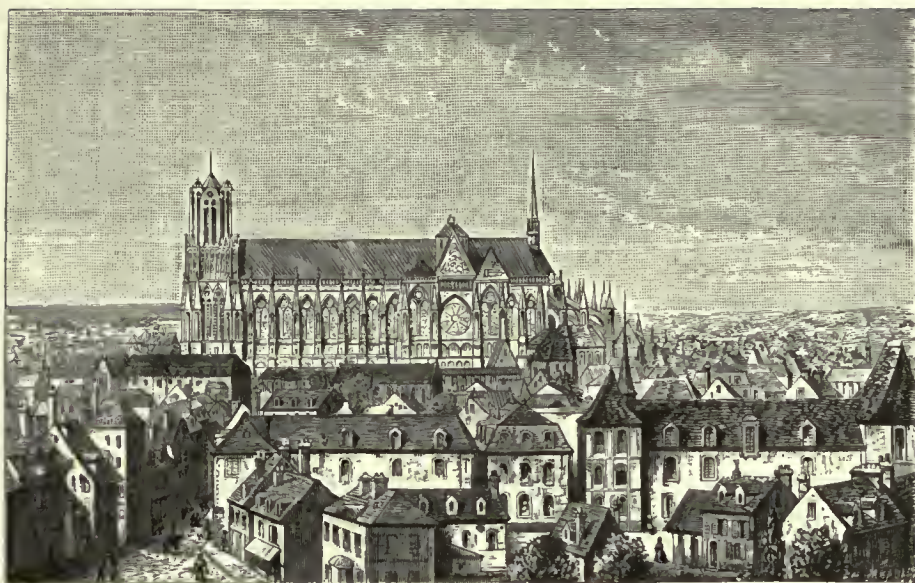
They have Societies of perseverance for the young, Clubs and Family Houses where Christian life is well organized. They are occupied with workmen and soldiers, and the Society of Saint Francis Xavier reckons them amongst its best auxiliaries. In this



way they send the rich Christian sap flowing through branches of the Church, which yesterday seemed withered and dead; thus it is that the dry branches blossom forth, and bear flowers and fruit.

Thus, in one word, do they bring Jesus Christ to live in souls, and prepare the social reign of victorious Truth.





E. J. GARNIER del.

Last glance at Rheims, birth-place of Blessed de la Salle. — Drawn by Édouard Garnier; engraved by Méaulle.

CHAPTER VII.

BEATIFICATION OF BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE



MINUTE examination of the extraordinary virtues of Blessed de la Salle occupied the Holy See during long years; but various causes suspended the process of beatification in which the Institute was so deeply interested.

In 1835, one hundred and sixteen years after his death, the process began simultaneously at Rheims, where M. de la Salle conceived the first idea of his work; in Paris, where he consolidated it by suffering, and at Rouen, where he left it definitely founded.

How different is the way of the Church from that of the world towards those whom she wishes to honor! The world awards

her great ones, while living, a few hurried honors which it makes haste to forget the moment their recipients are dead. During the brief moments of regret that follow their departure, it flings a few garlands on their grave; and then it goes on its way. It must make haste. Not being itself sure of the morrow, it cannot afford to delay such rewards as it wishes to bestow.

The Church acts differently. While a man lives, she suspends her judgment. He may belie the virtues of his past life, and die a sinner after having lived a Saint. She waits until death has finally consecrated his merits and manifested his perseverance.

She waits still further. She waits till every rumor has died away and until passions are cooled down; until the contemporaries of the man she judges are dead, and can no longer disturb by their interests or their vanities the peace in which she wishes to judge him; until time, which sets all things in their place and in their true proportions, has done its work. And if, after the lapse of a century, there remains a grand and venerated memory guarded by the respect of mankind, a sanctity which God Himself has proved and attested by miracles, then the process of canonization may begin.

The decree of introduction of the cause of the servant of God, the deed conferring on him the title of Venerable, was signed by Gregory XVI. It is dated the 8th of May 1840.

These proceedings are justly styled a "process." They lack neither the opposition, nor the formalities, nor any of those circumstances which enter into the most minute and complicated criminal law-suit. All the actions of him who is about to be placed on the altar are scrupulously searched into, all his writings are passed through the most rigorous ordeal of censorship, in order to make sure that they do not contain any error against faith. The doctrine must be perfectly pure, the life without spot; for the Church holds up to the veneration of men none but irreproachable standards.

All these requirements were filled by Blessed de la Salle.

On the 12th of September 1840 was promulgated the decree





declaring that no worship had been paid to him; for the Church does not allow her judgments to be anticipated, and the inconsiderate honors which the faithful might think fit to render to the dead would be an obstacle to those she reserves for them.

On the 22nd of April 1842, another decree proclaimed "the renown of sanctity" in M. de la Salle's life. And on the 6th of September 1846, the proceedings of Rheims, Paris and Rouen were canonically approved.

Then came the examination of the writings attributed to the servant of God.

The three Archbishops of Paris, Rheims and Rouen were charged to search out these writings and send them to Rome to be submitted to the examination of theologians. This enquiry was a lengthened one. A sufficiently large number of writings were, indeed, attributed to M. de la Salle, and they might have really been his work; but his manuscripts were lost. The Servant of God could not be held responsible for the interpretations, sometimes ill-intentioned, which the Jansenists might have slipped into the various editions of his works. This doubt was solved in favor of the cause by a decree of the Congregation of Rites, rendered on the 10th of January 1852, and which, on the 18th of the same month, was confirmed by the Sovereign Pontiff.

The process of beatification was, according to traditional custom, continued by an enquiry into the virtues of Venerable de la Salle and their heroic character.

On the 10th of July 1873, the Congregation of Rites, assembled in a public sitting under the presidency of the Pope, decided that the "theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity towards God and towards his neighbor, the Cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and the 'annexed virtues' had been practised by the servant of God, John Baptist de la Salle, in the heroic degree."

It was only on the Feast of All Souls of this same year 1873 that this decree, so long expected, was at last promulgated.

At noon, Pius IX. entered the throne room, where a hundred

Brothers were grouped round their Superior general, who was beaming with happiness. The Sovereign Pontiff seated himself upon his throne, having at his right Cardinal Patrizi, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, and Cardinal Pitra, reporter of the process of Beatification. We know how solemn are these festivities, and we have not forgotten what the majesty of Pius IX. was; we remember also the calm and pious countenance of Brother Philip: so it is easy to picture to ourselves the whole scene. But how the hearts of the Brothers must have leaped when M^r Bartolini, secretary of the Congregation of Rites, gave utterance to this solemn declaration:—“It is proved that the theological virtues—Faith, Hope and Charity towards God and man, as well as the Cardinal virtues—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance,—were practised in the heroic degree by the venerable servant of God, John Baptist de la Salle, so that henceforth we may proceed to the examination of the miracles.”

This great question of the examination of the miracles remained, effectively, to be dealt with.

Now the Church has always shown herself very minutious and hard to satisfy in the matter of miracles. She insists on their being evident and scientifically proved. She rejects all obscure or doubtful cases. Light, and still more light! this is what she cries unceasingly.

On the 13th of February 1883, the Congregation of Rites, assembled anew, recognized the validity of the processes which had been conducted simultaneously in Paris, Orleans and Rouen, concerning the miracles of Venerable de la Salle. This judgment was, on the very next day, approved by Leo XIII., happily reigning.

Since then, these miracles have never ceased to be studied in Rome. The Promoter of the faith presented his objections in a printed memorial which he handed to the advocate of the cause. The advocate of the cause answered in another memorial. The Consultors of the Congregation of Rites then devoted forty days to the study of the alleged and contested facts. Then followed a

fresh memorial from the Promoter, and a fresh answer from the advocate.

It was only now that a " Preparatory Congregation " was con-



Cardinal Pitru Postulator of the cause of Blessed de la Salle and Protector of the Institute.
— Engraved by Farlet.

voked to discuss certain facts; but all ended happily, and the last Congregation in which the final vote is given, and whence the Pope carries away the secret of his final decision, was held. All depends, indeed, on his Yes or No.

The whole Catholic universe read with respect and enthu-

siasm this decree on the miracles of Blessed de la Salle'. It is dated the 1st of November 1887, and begins by an admirable eulogy of the servant of God.

Then the three miracles, definitely asserted and acknowledged, are related successively. We shall give them here.

The first dates from that cruel year 1832 which was to make so many victims. A young girl of twenty, Victoire Ferry, who was employed in the general Hospital of Orleans, was the victim of a frightful accident. A mad woman fell upon her, threw her down, and tore her body with blows and kicks. They thought she would have died on the spot. She survived, however, but only to be threatened with death every day. Her sufferings were heart-rending to witness; she was burned with fever, and had fearful vomitings of blood; her whole body was swollen; her blood seemed to be decomposed. She sometimes remained three or four hours in her mother's arms like one dead. Horrible to say, she was bled no less than two hundred and sixteen times. This living death lasted twelve years; but in 1844, all seemed to be at an end. Then it was that some one told her about Venerable de la

¹ It is necessary, in order to penetrate ourselves with the spirit of the Church, not to be too free in the use of this word, and not to confound miracles recognized by her with " favors and graces " attributed to Blessed de la Salle, either after death, or during his life time. Amongst the latter, we must count the cure of a Brother of Guise the account of which deserves mention in a life of the holy founder : " A Brother of the Community of Guise, being dangerously ill, expressed a great desire to see before he died him whom he looked upon as his father. The pious school-master heard of this at Rheims towards noon, and at one o'clock he set out on foot, despite the burning heat of summer. The coarse habit, and especially a hair shirt which he wore almost always, made the journey most painful; nevertheless he walked seven leagues that day. The next morning, he arrived at Laon towards eleven o'clock, worn out with fatigue; but, instead of taking a little rest, he went to the church to say mass, and, having taken some food, went on to Guise. The Brothers, on beholding him, could scarcely believe their eyes, so amazed were they at the promptness with which this tender father had hastened to grant the desire of his disciple. The moment he arrived, Blessed de la Salle asked to see the sick man, embraced him paternally, and addressed to him words of consolation dictated by the tenderest charity. The Brother, who was at the last extremity, was moved to tears; he could only testify his gratitude by raising his eyes and hands to Heaven, to thank the servant of God for giving him the comfort he had so much longed for. But what was the joy of the Community, on seeing the piety of the sick man and the charity of the Superior rewarded by a swift and lasting cure! All gave thanks to God. " (*Le Véritable Ami de l'enfance*, 2nd edition, 1844, pp. 44 and 45. Cf. Canon Blain, *Spirit and Works of Venerable John Baptist de la Salle*, 1882, pp. 737, 738.)





Salle, and she felt a sudden confidence in him as a powerful intercessor. She read the life of the servant of God, and her confidence increased. Seeing an account of one of the miracles he had performed, she was suddenly seized with a kind of extraordinary internal commotion. She then heard the voice of the Venerable founder who appeared to her in the night, and said : “Thou art cured!” And cured she was, this sufferer who, just now unable to walk, rushed out to the church, and ascended the steps without any effort! The people surrounded her, they congratulated her, they wept for joy, and Rome was informed of the prodigy, which is one of those that the Promoter of the faith was forced to acknowledge as clearly authentic.

In 1866, Brother Adelinien was directing in Paris the Community of Saint Nicholas-des-Champs. He was an active and devoted master, given up wholly to his duties, and had reason to look forward to long years of health. Suddenly he was stricken by a thunderbolt. This thunderbolt was a disease of which the illustrious Doctor Trousseau said :— “There is no cure for it.” It was what is known in medicine as progressive locomotor ataxy. A horrible name, but a more horrible reality. It means a fatal rupture of the whole human equilibrium. The limbs of the sufferer are left to themselves, and cannot guide themselves; it is physical anarchy. We have seen sufferers afflicted with this malady, and there is not a more lamentable spectacle. The Brother felt that he had no one to turn to but God and His Saints. He started off heroically from Paris, and dragged himself to the tomb of Blessed de la Salle at Rouen. On the 5th of January 1868, after a first novena which brought no result, the poor stricken man, in no way discouraged, began another. Suddenly he felt atrociously sharp pains such as he had never known before. He might have thought it was death; but, instead of that, it was his cure; a complete, instantaneous and lasting cure. “There is no cure for it,” Doctor Trousseau had said. Venerable de la Salle, thanks be to God, had miraculously reversed the sentence of the great medical man.

The third miracle will seem more touching, for the very natural



Cure of Stephen de Suzanne, from a sketch by Krug belonging to the Institute. — Engraved by Farlet.

reason that it was performed on a child. This poor child, named

Stephen de Suzanne, though only eleven years old, was in reality older than many an old man. His rickety emaciation was painful to witness; the doctors counted one hundred pulsations in his feeble pulse, "and his body was so gathered up that the chin touched the knees." The family gave up all hope of saving this poor little emaciated creature, who had a cough that was strangling. Fortunately, the parents were true Christians, who thought of the child's soul. They were anxious about his First Communion. The child declared with his consumptive voice that he "wanted to make it." And he did make it, but as one on his death bed. They brought him his God, and he received Him with fervent piety, saying that he would finish his thanksgiving in heaven. His parents believed that he would, and poured out their anguish to Cardinal de Bonnechose. "In your place," said the prelate, "I would ask Venerable de la Salle to cure the child. He has just saved Brother Adelminien, and perhaps he will save your Stephen." The grandmother who was there, and who tenderly loved her grandchild, at once seized on this hope. They began a novena immediately. On the third day the child said:—"I think I am going to be cured." But, as it often happens to those about to be miraculously cured, he suffered more and more. Nevertheless, he persisted in hoping, and repeated:—"I shall be cured at the end of the novena." Then, turning to his mother, "Get ready my clothes," he said, "I want to go to mass." And he did go, the day after the novena, fresh, active, gay, cured in fact. Never was there a more instantaneous miracle, nor one received with more joy.

Such are the miracles of which, after long and patient examination, the Church guarantees the authenticity.

After this declaration, the Church had exhausted all her precautions, all her solemn preparations. There now remained to her nothing but to send forth from the dome of Saint Peter's the great cry which reverberates all over the universe:—"Blessed de la Salle, pray for us!"

These festivities of the Beatification are splendid, and we can

form some idea of them from the account of what took place in Rome, on Sunday, February 19th 1888¹.



Chapel of the Brothers' Boarding-school at Rouen, where the relics of Blessed de la Salle are preserved.
— Drawn by Seltier; engraved by Méaulle.

¹ See the *Univers* of February 23rd; from which the above is in great part taken.

It is above the portico of Saint Peter's, " in the great hall of



Festivities of the Beatification. — Statue by Émilien Cabuchet, which was exposed in the church of Saint Sulpice during the solemn Triduum of March 13rd, 14th, 15th 1838. — Engraved by Chapon.

canonization," that the solemn rite is about to be accomplished,

and this noble hall has been adorned for the occasion. Innumerable waxlights make the gilding shine, and cast their rays over the spectators. All are seated. In the first tribune, to the right, is the Superior general, Brother Joseph, who in recollection and prayer is preparing to assist at the triumph of the glorious founder of his Institute. This day will certainly be the happiest of his life, and his deep and silent joy is shared by the six Assistants, Brothers Ozée, Louis de Poissy, Cyrus, Junien, Apronien-Marie and Raphaelis.

That Brother Adelminien, whose miraculous cure we have just related, is still alive, and held to be at the high festival, and there he was the living witness of a prodigy henceforth uncontested, and proclaimed by Rome. Count Stephen de Suzanne, the other miraculously cured one, was not able to take his place beside Brother Adelminien and thank by his presence the powerful intercessor to whom he owes his life. But the family of the holy founder is represented at the foot of that altar where, presently, the first liturgical prayer will be offered up to the glory of Blessed de la Salle. Count de la Salle de Rochemaure, great-grand-nephew of John Baptist de la Salle, occupies a place of honor near the Vicars general of the diocese of Rheims, where the servant of God was born, and the diocese of Rouen, where he died. The other tribunes are filled with delegates of the Institute, who have hastened thither from all parts of the world, and will soon proclaim to all the nations of the earth, where they are teaching childhood and directing youth, the never-to-be-forgotten memories of this day. We see a Brother from America elbowing a Brother from the Indies, a Spaniard side by side with an Englishman, and nothing could be more touching than the variety of so many nations all united in one and the same thought, in one and the same praise.

On the benches to the right and to the left, two hundred Brothers are grouped above twenty prelates. The Archbishops of Rouen and Besançon are seated there beside the Bishops of Orleans and Poitiers. Not far from them, Brother Robustinian, Postulator of





the cause, is waiting for the sacred rite in which he is to take so prominent a part.

Before the function begins, there is time to take a view of the hall where this grand liturgical drama is about to be performed. Four vast canvases are spread upon the walls, and attract the eyes of all; three of them represent, as accurately as may be, those three miracles of Blessed de la Salle which the severity of Roman censure has declared to be authentic beyond all dispute. Victoria Ferry, Brother Adelminien and young Stephen de Suzanne are represented receiving life and healing from the blessed servant of God. A fourth picture, more solemn than the others, shows us the saintly founder carried up to Heaven in the arms of angels. But, despite all the talent of the painter, these four scenes would not be understood were they not accompanied by these beautiful inscriptions printed in that lapidary style of which the Romans have preserved the secret. The illustrious Father Angelini undertook to write these four legends in stately, epigraphical Latin which excites universal admiration in this unique assembly composed of so many scientific and literary men¹.

Suddenly there is a great hush; it is ten o'clock. The door behind the altar opens wide, and the officiating prelate appears, accompanied by two Canons of Saint Peter's. It is to a Belgian prelate, M^r de Neckere, that the chapter has confided the celebration of the august rite at which we are about to assist.

At a quarter past ten, the Cardinals of the sacred Congregation of Rites enter, wearing the *cappa magna* with white ermine. The Swiss guards, in that picturesque costume of the sixteenth century, go before them. The impression of solemnity deepens, all feel that something great is about to take place.

The decisive moment has come at last. Brother Robustinian, Postulator of the cause, rises, and, advancing towards Cardinal Bianchi, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, asks him to promul-

¹ See farther on, amongst " Documents, " the text and translation of these four inscriptions.

gate the apostolical letters, in the form of a brief, whose object is "the Beatification of Blessed de la Salle, the Venerable servant of God."

But we must not forget that the assembly is being held in a hall which is attached to the Chapter of Saint Peter's, and it is proper that the head of this Chapter should here interfere to give his consent to this solemn proclamation. The consent is given, and amidst a silence of profound respect, the brief is read¹. We can imagine the feelings of the whole assembly at this moment; above all, of Brother Joseph and his Religious; we can fancy what their emotion must have been beneath their external calm and self-contained joy.

As soon as the reading of the brief is over, M^{gr} de Neckere entones in a loud voice the song of the Church in her triumphs and rejoicings— *Te Deum laudamus!*

Te Deum laudamus! We thank Thee, O, my God, for having sent this consolation to Thy Church in her heavy trials.

Te Deum laudamus! We thank Thee, O, my God, for giving such a testimony of Thy love to this holy instructor of children, in an hour when Christian education is subject to such perfidious and dangerous attacks.

Te Deum laudamus! We thank Thee, O, my God, in the name of those fifteen thousand spiritual sons of Blessed de la Salle; in the name of the oldest Brother and of the youngest novice, in the name of their three hundred thousand pupils; in the name of France, which has been the cradle of the Institute, and where, as M^{gr} d'Annecy so aptly said, "arose this sun which enlightens and warms the world of souls."

Scarcely had M^{gr} de Neckere begun to entone the *Te Deum*, when the veil which hid the picture of Blessed de la Salle and

¹ See farther on in "Documents," the text and translation of these apostolical letters to which we have appended the new office of Blessed de la Salle and the Pastoral letter of the Archbishop of Paris. The Feast of Blessed de la Salle, as a double of the first class, will be kept every year, on May 4th, in the dioceses of Rheims, Paris and Rouen, and in all the chapels of the Brothers.





his relics was suddenly drawn aside. At the same moment, an indescribable harmony struck upon the ear; it was the bells of Saint Peter's ringing out the glad tidings to Rome and to the world. But, however imposing may be the language of bells, it needs to be translated, and the officiating prelate interprets it. The *Te Deum* is over, and M^{gr} de Neckere calls out in rhythmical tones of the utmost solemnity : *Blessed John Baptist de la Salle, pray for us!* This is the first time that invocation has been publicly uttered, and henceforth the world will reverberate with it to the end of time. All present make the liturgical response familiar to the children of the Church, and in which such high doctrine is condensed : *Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi*. For the first time, too, is heard that " proper " of the Blessed founder, and for the first time his relics are incensed. Then mass begins; the mass *Justus* of Confessors who are not Pontiffs. It is sung in music by the choristers of the Juliana chapel of Saint Peter's and the choir of Saint Saviour's in *Lauro*. The chaunts are noble and worthy of the festival; but they do not prevent the assistants from listening with recollection to that Collect, that Secret, that Post-communion which, approved by the Congregation of Rites, will be to-morrow printed in all our missals, and recited by every priest at every altar all over the world.

At half past twelve, the first function is over.

But the Sovereign Pontiff has not yet appeared, and the last and most solemn part of the rite, which is reserved for the afternoon of this memorable day, has yet to be accomplished.

The Pope, at four o'clock, enters the hall of canonization to venerate the relics and the image of Blessed de la Salle. He is received with great pomp by the Chapter of Saint Peter's, and the students of the Vatican Seminary, who accompany him to the altar. The hall presents the same spectacle as in the morning; but now seculars occupy more of its space. It was essential that France should not be absent from these precincts where such honors have been discerned to a great Christian and a great Frenchman; and France is there, effectively, represented by her Ambassador, Count Lefebvre de

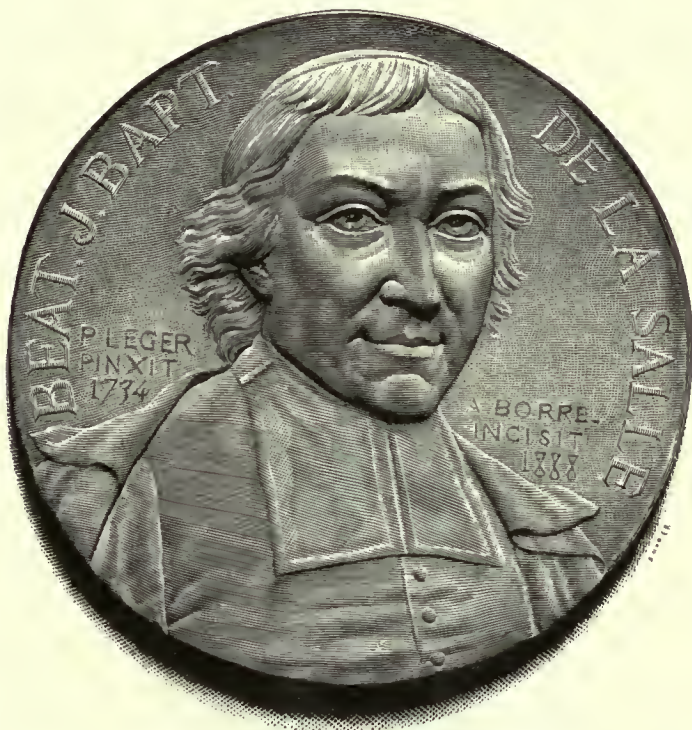
Behaine, and by the whole staff of the Embassy in full dress. These Frenchmen are conscious of the august duty they are fulfilling, and they accomplish it with respect. Leo XIII. is at the foot of the



Blessed de la Salle in glory. — Engraved by Fattier, from a composition of L. R. intended to perpetuate the memory of the festivities of the Beatification.

altar, and his prayer does not last less than half an hour amidst universal silence. What lofty thoughts, what thanksgiving, what ardent supplications go up in that prayer of the Sovereign Pontiff in which all present are silently joining! But, at last, the Pope rises, and the Superior general of the Institute of the Brothers

offers him the usual oblations. These oblations consist in the life of Blessed de la Salle, his picture, a wonderful bouquet of flowers, above all in a filigree reliquary adorned with precious stones, and containing a relic of the Beatified servant of God. Leo XIII. then addresses to Brother Joseph and the Brothers who accompany him a few words in which the gentleness of the father tempers the



Commemorative medal struck in honor of the Beatification of Blessed de la Salle.
— Engraved by Napier, from the original of A. Borel.

majesty of the King. The great-grand-nephew of Blessed de la Salle is admitted with them to the favor of kissing the hand which blesses the City and the world. Then, the Sovereign Pontiff withdraws, and Vespers begin. With what joy the Brothers join in the *Magnificat*!

And now all is over, and the great day of the 19th of February 1888 is henceforth only a memory. But, in truth, it is a memory which will live as long as the Institute of Blessed de la

Salle, that is to say as long as Christian humanity; and it will re-echo to the end of time that prayer on which the Church, in introducing it into her liturgy, has set an indelible seal : —

“ O God, Who didst raise up the Blessed John Baptist, Confessor, to teach the poor the way of salvation, and to give science to little ones, and Who hast through him gathered together a new family in the Church, grant, we beseech Thee, unto all those that instruct Christian youth, always to follow his example and profit by his intercession. Through our Lord. Amen. ”

This prayer is the most lasting, and at the same time the most beautiful panegyric of Blessed de la Salle. It sums up this book, and by it will we end it *in Christo Jesu!*



DOCUMENTS



I.

APOSTOLICAL BRIEF

CONCERNING THE BEATIFICATION

OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD

JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

LEO PP. XIII.,

AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.

Qui doctrinæ salutaris lumine rudes atque inscios homines collustrant, ut Vitæ et Veritatis viam ineant, quam præclaro munere fungantur, quamque insignem æternæ gloriæ coronam sint recepturi, Divinæ Litteræ nos edocent, cum eos hoc commendant præconio : « Qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos, quasi stellæ in perpetuas æternitates. » (Dan. xii, 3.) Atque hac potissimum corona donandi videntur, qui,

LEO XIII., POPE,

IN PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THE MATTER.

How sublime is the function exercised, and how brilliant the crown of eternal glory that shall be received by those who carry the light of the doctrine of salvation to the rude and ignorant, that they may walk in the way of life and truth, Holy Writ teaches us, in passing upon them this eulogy : “ *Those that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity.* ” (Dan., xii, 3.) Most especially deserving of this crown are they

posthabitis rebus humanis, omnem suam curam operamque in eo collocant, ut nimirum christiani homines jam inde a pueritia imbuantur Evangelica doctrina et cœlestibus iis præceptis quæ ad Vitam recta perducunt.

Inter hujusmodi fideles Christi administros mire excelluit, sæculo decimo septimo, Joannes Baptista de la Salle, quem providens Deus voluit per id tempus in Ecclesia existere, ut, cum late disseminati serperent in Gallia Jansenii errores, ipse integritatem fidei et patrimonium christianæ sapientiæ in juventute tueretur.

Natus est Rhemis in Gallia, anno Domini MDCLI, Ludovico et Nicolaa Moët parentibus, qui studium domesticæ laudis non tam in nobilitate generis quam in pietate ponebant. In puerulo bona spes, et mirifica virtutis indoles, quæ non modo nunquam restincta, sed firmata est quotidie magis, præsertim cum tales essent parentes, qui facile nollent a natura sejungi disciplinam. Quapropter non mirum est si Joannes Baptista ad pietatem excolendam mature animum appulerit, nugas vero ineptiasque, quibus puerilis ætas delectari maxime solet, jam a teneris fastidiverit, sanctorum econtra Vitas atque Historias in deliciis habens. Puer enim ad sanctitatem natus jam tum studiose quærere visus est præstans aliquod exemplar, quod sibi ad imitandum proponeret. Naturæ interea virtus moribus perficiebatur : parentibus ita obsequi, ut ne leviter quidem de eo queri possent ; periculosis cœtibus et ludis abstinere ; templa frequens adire ; rei divinæ non adstare

who, disregarding things human, devote all their attention and all their efforts to initiate Christian souls, from early youth, into Evangelical doctrine and those celestial precepts which conduce directly to life. Among those faithful servants of Christ, admirably shone forth in the seventeenth century John Baptist de la Salle, whom God, in His Providence, raised up in His Church at a time when the errors of Jansenius were being scattered broadcast throughout France, in order to maintain intact among youth the integrity of their faith and their inheritance of Christian wisdom.

He was born in Rheims, France, in the year of Our Lord 1651, of Louis and Nicole Moët, who sought to make the chief glory of their house consist rather in piety of life than in a noble extraction. His childhood was full of promise; he showed a wonderful disposition for virtue, which, far from relaxing, became confirmed, and increased from day to day under the guidance of parents who gave a wise direction to his natural inclinations. Wherefore it is not to be wondered at that John Baptist should, at an early age, give himself up to the cultivation of piety, and that he despised the trifles and frivolities in which youth is accustomed to delight, finding, on the contrary, great pleasure in reading the lives and narratives of the Saints. For already does this child born to holiness seem to seek some eminent model which he might propose to himself for imitation. In the meantime, his conduct perfects his natural virtues. So submissive is he to his parents that they cannot find in him the least cause for complaint : he abstains from dangerous company and amusements; he is frequently in church, and not only does

solum, sed perlitanti sacerdoti rite inservire; omnia denique pietatis officia persolvere, sic ad pietatem compositus ut cæteris exemplo esset.

Quum vero per ætatem licuit, celebrare scholas cœpit, in quibus specimen dedit sane optimum et animi et ingenii. Non minus enim parandis virtutibus quam litteris addiscendis operam navavit, tanta vero sedulitate et solertia, ut æqualibus suis in exemplum præluxerit, magistrorum expectationem longe superaverit. Ut primum e pueris excessit, quum se divino quodam instinctu ad sacerdotium sentiret impelli, data a parentibus venia, ab archiepiscopo Rhemensi impetravit, ut in clericorum numerum adscisceretur. Tum probe intelligens, quæ præstanda sint officia ab iis qui vocati sunt in sortem Domini, eam amplexus est vitæ rationem, qua plane videbatur omnibus jam ille singulari virtutum excellentiæ præludere, quam postea est consecutus. Vita tam sancte instituta quantam ei existimationem pepererit, vel ex eo conjici potest, quod cum quidam Archidiaconus, beneficio, quo in æde metropolitana cum Canonici titulo fruebatur, se abdicare vellet, Joannem Baptistam sponte delegit, cui conferretur. Neque vero opinio de adolescente hominem fefellit: quoniam ille inter Canonicos cooptatus, adeo fuit officii memor, ut et ornamenta collegis esset et exemplo.

Interea, curriculo litterarum emenso, ad severiorum disciplinarum studium alacriter sese contulit. In Rhemensi enim Athenæo philoso-

he assist at the holy Sacrifice, but he serves the priest in the celebration of the sacred mysteries; in a word, he fulfils all his religious duties with such piety as to be an example unto others.

When his years permitted, he began to attend school, where he displayed the highest qualities of head and heart. He applied himself with such diligence and assiduity, no less to the acquisition of virtue than to the study of letters, that he became a shining light for his companions and surpassed the highest expectations of his masters. As he advanced in years, he felt himself as by a Divine inspiration drawn towards the priesthood, and besought, with the consent of his parents, the Archbishop of Rheims to admit him among his clergy. Henceforth, realizing the obligations of those who are called to the inheritance of the Lord, he embraced a mode of life which, as was evident to all, already gave earnest of the high degree of virtue that he was afterwards to attain. In what esteem a life so holily begun was held, may be gathered from the fact, that when a certain Archdeacon wished to resign a benefice with the title of Canon in the Metropolitan church, he, at once, chose John Baptist to be his successor. Nor was he deceived in his choice of the young man; for, once admitted amongst the canons, he was so mindful of duty, that he became an ornament and a model to his colleagues. In the meantime, having completed his course of humanities, he cheerfully gave himself up to more arduous studies. In the Academy of Rheims, he wins the highest honors in philosophy; thence, with due authorization, he goes to Paris in order to study Theology; and in the

phix lauream summa ingenii laude meritus est, et, cum theologiæ operam dare cuperet, facta facultate, Lutetiam Parisiorum est profectus, ibique in florentissimo Sancti Sulpicii seminario, tanquam in pernobili virtutis et doctrinæ palestra, laudum optimi cujusque brevi æmulator extitit. Profecto facile existimari potest, quanta contentione homo constantis ingenii excolendique animi cupidus ad Theologiæ et sacrarum litterarum studium incumberet, et quam avide ex divinis hisce fontibus sapientiam hauriret. Quapropter, magna doctrinæ supellectile instructus, Rhemos in patriam revertitur, atque ibi quum annos ad XXVII natus esset, pridie diei Paschatis, sacerdotio initiatus est.

Tum vero apud se reputans non amplius se sui juris, sed Dei proprium esse quasi mancipio et nexu, se totum ejus gloriæ et proximorum saluti tradere planeque devovere constituit. Quamobrem nullum sane est onus, quod Dei causa sibi non suscipiendum existimet; nullum sacri muneris officium, quo sacerdos novensilis non naviter integreque defungatur. Proinde divino cultui provehendo sedulam dare operam; de catholicæ fidei veritate crebras ad populum habere conciones; curare diligenter ne Janseniani contagione sua cæteros christianos labefacerent; pœnitentiæ sacramentum, quo nihil est humano generi salutarius, assidue administrare; visere demum ægrotos, solari calamitosos, consilio, opera, prout res postulabat, proximos quotidie juvare. Quoniam vero compertum habuerat populum in sacerdotes tanquam in specula oculos conjicere, eorumque mores plus quam præcepta

very flourishing seminary of Saint Sulpice, as in a most noble school of virtue and science, he soon becomes the rival in merit of the most distinguished amongst his fellow students. Indeed, it may easily be imagined with what earnest application a man of such persevering disposition, and anxious to cultivate his mind, devoted himself to the study of Theology and the Sacred Sciences, and with what avidity he derived wisdom from these Divine sources. Wherefore, he returned to Rheims, his birthplace, bearing with him a large supply of learning, and there, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, on Holy Saturday, he was ordained priest. Henceforth, considering that he no longer belonged to himself, but to God alone as His servant and bondsman, he devoted himself wholly and entirely to procure the glory of his Master and the salvation of his neighbor. And so, there is no burden that he does not deem it his duty to assume in the cause of God; there is no function of the sacred ministry that the newly-ordained priest does not apply himself to, and that he does not faithfully discharge. Wherefore he unremittingly gives his care to everything calculated to promote the Divine worship: explaining to the people the truths of Catholic faith; taking every precaution lest the malady of Jansenism should spread among Christians hitherto unaffected; assiduously administering the sacrament of penance, than which nothing is more salutary for mankind; visiting the sick, consoling the afflicted, and constantly, by word and work, aiding his neighbor as occasion presents itself. And because he was convinced that the people have their eyes fixed upon the priest as upon a mirror, and that his conduct speaks more efficaciously than his precepts, he

valere ad disciplinam, talem se præbere studuit, qualem olim Paulus voluerat se præstitisse Titum: « In omnibus temetipsum præbe exemplum bonorum operum, in doctrina, in integritate, in gravitate. »

Verum in Joanne Baptista eximia omnino et singularis laus fuit, atque inter cæteras virtutes ejus mirabiliter eluxit summa æquanimitas cum fere incredibili constantia et firmitate animi conjuncta. Ex quo quidem factum est, ut postea, in explendo munere sibi a Deo assignato, omnia adversa quiete patienterque pertulerit, et a magnis difficultatibus, in quas sæpe incurrit, nunquam sit deterritus.

Sed divinæ Providentiæ numen cito causam obtulit pientissimo viro, cur ille manum admoveret operi, quod vim beneficiorum christianæ civilique reipublicæ attulit maximam, et gloriam nominis ejus ad posteritatem consecravit. Etenim, quum aliquot scholis ad institutionem puellarum antea, postea puerorum inopum inchoatis potius, quam constitutis præficeretur, ipse ad salutem animarum prudens vidit planeque sensit quanta utilitas ex iis manare potuisset in populum, si hujusmodi scholas certis institutis et legibus regerent viri divino cultui addicti atque in hanc curam unice intenti. Idcirco, a Deo optimorum consiliorum auctore ope implorata, mentem voluntatemque suscepit instituendi Collegium magistrorum, qui pueros maxime e plebe ad religionem probosque mores et ad rudimenta litterarum informarent.

Neque mora interposita suam ipsius domum vult prima incunabula

sought to be what formerly St Paul had counselled Titus to prove himself: "*In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity in gravity.*" (Titus, ii, 7.) But the virtue that shone above all others, and was his special glory, was great equanimity combined with almost incredible constancy and firmness of soul. Whence it is that afterwards, in fulfilling the ministry to which God appointed him, he bore all opposition quietly and patiently, and was never deterred by any difficulties, however great, that frequently beset his path.

But Divine Providence soon presented to this most devout man a motive for undertaking a work which should bring an abundance of blessings to the Christian and civil commonwealth, and consecrate the glory of his name for all time. While in charge at first of girls' schools, and later of boys', which were in an inchoate state, his insight into what was needful for the salvation of souls, soon saw and perfectly understood of what great use to the people these schools might be, if directed according to certain rules and principles by men consecrated to God and exclusively devoted to that object. With this view, having implored the assistance of God, Author of every good counsel, he devoted all his energies to the formation of a society of teachers to instruct children, and chiefly those of the people, in religion, morality, and the rudiments of learning. Without delay, he designs his own house to become the cradle of the work, and in it he establishes the Novitiate wherein the masters might be trained to the piety and science, which afterwards they, as they would be sent forth elsewhere, were to impart to youth.

præbere operi, in qua magistri tyrocinio posito ad eam pietatem ac disciplinam erudiantur, quam posthac, peregre missi, pueris impertiant.

Itaque nonnullos bonæ spei adolescentes elegit, jam alumnos disciplinæ suæ, quibus docendi methodum traderet altricemque domum VIII Kal. Julias an. MDCLXXXI. Dei auspicio et numine dedicavit.

Humani generis hostis, quasi futura præsentiens, consiliis cœptisque hujusmodi acriter intercessit, quin tamen se flecti Joannes Baptista, deque sententia incoeptoque dimoveri sineret. Immo vero etiam, cum nascentis Congregationis fama percrebresceret juvenesque tradendi se in disciplinam sancti viri cupidos complures arcesseret, ipse alumnorum numerum auxit et in ampliori domo sedem Instituti stabilem collocavit. Neque est civili societati desideratus diu uber et præstans operæ fructus. Etenim brevi interjecto annorum spatio, cum illi puerorum erudiendorum rationem jam satis iniissent, non modo Rhemis, sed aliis etiam in oppidis Galliæ scholas aperuerunt ad normam quam erant edocti. Solers vir, ut christianæ puerorum institutioni se penitus dederet, ab omni rerum humanarum cura et cogitatione se abduxit, ac sibi dictam interpretatus eam Evangelii sententiam : « Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, » divenditis omnibus bonis, quidquid pecuniæ redegerat dispersit, dedit pauperibus, sibi et Congregationi suæ sociam comitemque constituit paupertatem. Sed quo plus Joannes Baptista se terrestribus despoliaverat, eo largius illi divinæ bonitatis dona affluerunt. Omnibus enim negotiis

Therefore he selected some young men of promise, who had been already trained by himself, to whom he gave his own method of teaching; and June 24th 1681, he dedicated the mother-house under the auspices and the blessing of God. The enemy of man, as though foreseeing the future, fiercely thwarted these designs and undertakings; but John Baptist did not allow himself to be turned aside from his decision and from the work begun. On the contrary, as the fame of the rising Congregation grew apace, and attracted numerous youths desirous of receiving instruction from the holy man, he increased the number of his disciples and permanently established the seat of the Institute in a larger house. Nor had the public long to wait in expectation of abundant and excellent fruits from the work. In a few years, as soon as his disciples had learned the method of teaching, they opened schools not only in Rheims but in other towns of France as well, which they conducted according to their rules. This thoughtful man, in order to give himself wholly to the Christian education of youth, divested himself of all concern and solicitude about human affairs, and applying to himself that sentence of Holy Writ : "*Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses.*" (Matth., x, 9), and selling all his goods, he distributed the proceeds among the poor and chose poverty as the friend and companion of himself and his Congregation. But the more John Baptist divested himself of earthly goods, the more abundantly did he receive the gifts of Divine goodness. Free from all worldly anxiety, his soul grew stronger in charity, and became the more inflamed in the pursuit of virtue; and not content with

expeditus, vehementiorem concepit animo charitatem acriusque exarsit in studia virtutum, ad quæ non solum contendit ipse, sed etiam discipulos suos exemplo provocavit. Eorum autem vitæ disciplinam et scholarum rationem cum certam et stabilitam esse vellet, propterea leges scivit Evangelii præceptis apprime consentaneas, quas auctoritas et judicium sapientium virorum antea probavit, successus deinde atque experimentum amplissime confirmavit. Cum vero litterarum primordiis pueros diligentissime inibui voluit, nihil curavit magis, atque in oculis habuit, quam ut teneris animis per christianam doctrinam Evangelicæ veritatis lumen afflueret. Constat tot tantisque curis et laboribus industrii viri fructus sane copiosos respondisse.

Verum jam pridem desiderium ingens eum incesserat communicandi hujusmodi utilitates atque fructus cum Gallia universa : propterea, non sine providentis Dei consilio, cum duobus alumnis suis Lutetiam se contulit. Vixdum operi sese accinxerat, incredibile fere est, quam repentina atque atrox molestiarum tempestas coorta sit, et quam acerbè et contumeliose inveherentur in eum Janseniani.

Accessit etiam quod, initio puerilis hujus institutionis, gravia quoque impedimenta illata sint, a quibus minime debuissent. Ille tamen illusus, jactatus injuriis, vexatus ignominia calumniæ, deductus in judicium, pecunia mulctatus, ad ludibrium positus procacitatis impudentiæque ludi magistrorum, omnia pertulit, omnia exorbuit animo non minus æquo quam invicto.

being alone, he stimulated his disciples to the same practice by his example. As he wished their rule of life and their school-methods to be certain and stable, he framed laws in strict conformity with the precepts of the Gospel, which had been previously approved by the authority and judgment of prudent men, and which success and experience afterwards fully confirmed. When, therefore, he would diligently instruct children in the first principles of learning, he had at heart chiefly to enlighten their tender souls by means of Christian doctrine with the light of Evangelical truth. And it is noteworthy what abundant fruit was gathered from the many and great cares and labors of this industrious man. For sometime he was seized with a great desire to disseminate throughout France the advantages and fruits of his work, and, for this purpose, under the guidance of God's Providence, he repaired with two of his disciples to Paris. Here he had scarcely begun his work, when it is almost incredible to relate what a sudden and atrocious tempest of annoyances rose up, and how the Jansenists vented against him their bitterness and outrages. Moreover, it happened that at the beginning of this infant Institution grave impediments arose even on the part of those from whom they should be least expected.

Ridiculed, maltreated, harassed by ignominious calumnies, drawn into lawsuits, mulcted in fines, made sport of through the insolence of school-masters, he bore with all, overcame all with a courage as unmoved as it was invincible. Indeed, by reason of the particular and intimate union with which he was bound to the Church of Rome, he

Profecto ex singulari intimoque nexu, quo erat cum Ecclesia Romana devinctus, sæpe graves subiit improborum offensiones et odia. Sed ille plane intelligens ex hac Petri cathedra, tanquam ex stirpe ad ramos, ad singulas christianas institutiones principium vitæ et viriditatis affluere, se suamque Congregationem tutelæ Romanorum Pontificum commendavit. Quod quidem luculenter testatur legatio ad Clementem XI decessorem Nostrum missa, ut obsequium coram profiteretur, Instituti rationem exponeret, scholam in Urbe aperiret et regulas auctoritati Pontificis Maximi subjiceret.

Cum sibi interea videretur operis tutelæ et conservationi satis consultum, a Congregationis gubernaculo, id quod propter magnam animi demissionem non semel tentaverat, recedere decrevit. Rem vero ita dexter egit, ut fieret voti compos, et qui Congregationis auctor et moderator extiterat, discipulorum suorum pareret imperio. Plurima tamen cum adhuc esset in eo auctoritas, ea sic usus est, ut nihil inde adeptus sit commodi, difficultates vero, labores, molestias, et qui paulo post concitati sunt fluctus, omnes in eum redundantes suscepit. Dei tamen fiducia et conscientie testimonio fretus, sæviante extrinsecus procella, animi servavit æquabilitatem, et cum magis omni-genis ejusmodi molestiis premeretur, extremo morbo correptus, intra paucos dies placidissimo exitu spiritum efflavit.

Obeunte ipso, non quidem exaruit fons rerum salutarium, quas instituerat; imo vero ad perennitatem manans, et in plurimos quasi rivulos

was frequently the object of grave insults and of odium on the part of the wicked. But, knowing full well that from the Chair of Peter flows the principle of life and vigour, as sap from the parent-stock to the branches, he recommended himself and his Congregation to the protection of the Roman Pontiffs. This is strikingly proved in his deputing a Brother to Our predecessor, Clement XI., to render homage to his person, to explain to him the method of the Institute, to open a school in Rome, and to submit his rules to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. In the meantime, when he thought he had sufficiently provided for the protection and preservation of his work, he resolved, as out of great humility he had already more than once attempted, to withdraw from the government of the Congregation. So skilfully did he manage, that he obtained the object of his desires, and he who had been the founder and director of the Congregation, now became obedient to the government of his disciples. But as a certain amount of authority was still vested in him, he used it in such a manner that no advantage accrued to him therefrom; but he reserved to himself as his own all the difficulties, all the labors, all the vexations and storms that in a little while rose up against him. Sustained by his confidence in God and the testimony of his conscience, while furious storms raged without, he held his soul in peace; at the time that he was most harassed by persecution of every kind, he was seized with his last illness, and in a few days breathed forth his soul in peace.

But after his death the source of the salutary works he had established did not dry up; on the contrary, always flowing, its waters are distributed into many streams which

per universas orbis terrarum partes deductus, copiose irrigat Ecclesiam.

Magna interea cum jam esset virtutum commendatio, tum post ejus obitum aucta magis est, ac latius diffusa. Quapropter fel. rec. Pio IX decessore Nostro Pontifice Maximo, absolutis omnibus quæ in hujusmodi judicio erant necessaria, in Congregatione Cardinalium Sacris Ritibus præpositorum disceptari cœptum est de virtutibus, quibus Venerabilis Joannes Baptista de la Salle inclaruit, easque de ejusdem Congregationis assensu, heroicum attigisse culmen declaravit idem decessor noster Kalendis Novembribus an. MDCCCLXXIII. Postea quæstio agitata est de miraculis, quæ, Venerab. Joanne Baptista de la Salle deprecante, a Deo patrata ferebantur, rebusque omnibus severissimo judicio ponderatis, tria miracula vera et explorata sunt habita; ideoque Nos Kal. Nov. an. MDCCCLXXXVII Decretum edidimus de eorumdem miraculorum veritate, atque ad ulteriora procedi concessimus, quin esset necesse ad alterius miraculi pervestigationem venire. Illud supererat, ut dictæ Congregationis Cardinales rogarentur, num tuto procedi posse censerent ad Beatorum honores Ven. Joanni Baptistæ de la Salle decernendos; iique, in generali conventu coram Nobis habito XVII Kalendas Decembres an. MDCCCLXXXVII, tuto id fieri posse unanimi consensione responderunt. Nos tamen in re tanti momenti Nostram aperire mentem distulimus, donec fervidis precibus a Patre luminum subsidium posceremus. Quo facto, tandem, V Kalendas Decembres an. MDCCCLXXXVII solemnī decreto pronuntiavimus procedi tuto

flow throughout the whole world and copiously irrigate the Church. The fame of his virtue, already very great, increased after his death and became widely known. Wherefore, under Our predecessor of happy memory, Pius IX., all requisite forms for a judgment of this nature having been completed, discussion was begun in the Congregation of cardinals of Sacred Rites, upon the virtues that shone out in the Venerable John Baptist de la Salle; and, with the concurrence of the said Congregation, Our predecessor, on the first day of November 1873, declared those virtues to have reached the degree of heroic. Then was discussed the question of miracles said to have been wrought by God, through the intercession of the Venerable John Baptist de la Salle, and all things having been examined with the strictest investigation, three miracles were admitted as certain and proven. And so, We, on the first day of November 1887, published a decree regarding the authenticity of those miracles, and permitting the Congregation to proceed to the next step without discussion of any further miracle. It only remained to ask the cardinals of the aforesaid Congregation if the honors of the beatified might in all safety be decreed to the Venerable John Baptist de la Salle; and the said cardinals, in a general assembly held in Our presence November 15th 1887, unanimously replied that they might be so decreed. We, however, deferred pronouncing judgment in a matter of such great moment, until by fervent prayer We had implored assistance from the Father of lights. Which having done, We solemnly decreed, November 27th 1887, that in all security the beatification of the Venerable John Baptist de la Salle might be proceeded with.

posse ad solemnem Ven. Joannis Baptistæ de la Salle Beatificationem. Quæ cum ita sint, Nos, precibus permoti universæ Congregationis Fratrum Scholarum christianarum, auctoritate Nostra Apostolica, harum Litterarum vi facultatem facimus, ut idem Venerabilis Dei Servus Joannes Baptista de la Salle Beati nomine in posterum nuncupetur, ejusque corpus et lipsana seu reliquie, non tamen in solemnibus supplicationibus deferendæ, publicæ fidelium venerationi proponantur, atque imagines radiis decorentur.

Præterea, eadem auctoritate Nostra Apostolica, concedimus, ut de illo recitetur Officium et Missa singulis annis de Communi Confessorum cum orationibus propriis per nos approbatis, juxta rubricas Missalis et Breviarii Romani. Hanc vero officii recitationem Missæque celebrationem fieri dumtaxat concedimus in civitatibus et diœcesibus Rhodomagensi, Rhemensi et Parisiensi, templisque omnibus atque oratoriis piarum domorum Congregationis Fratrum Scholarum christianarum, ab omnibus christifidelibus qui Horas canonicas recitare teneantur, et, quod ad Missas attinet, ab omnibus sacerdotibus, tam sæcularibus quam regularibus, ad Ecclesias in quibus festum agitur confluentibus.

Denique concedimus, ut solemnia Beatificationis Ven. Joannis Baptistæ de la Salle in templis supradictis celebrentur cum Officio et Missa duplicis majoris ritus, quod quidem fieri præcipimus die per Ordinarios respective designanda, intra annum, postquam eadem solemnia ob temporum conditiones in Aula superiori porticus Basilicæ Vaticanæ

Such being the case, urged by the prayers of the whole Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, We do, by Our Apostolical authority, in virtue of these Letters, grant the right of henceforth calling this same servant of God, John Baptist de la Salle, by the title of Blessed, and that his body and all relics belonging to him be exposed for the public veneration of the faithful—except that they cannot be borne in solemn public prayer—and furthermore that his pictures be adorned with rays. Moreover, by this same Apostolical authority of Ours, We grant that there be recited once a year in his honor an Office and the Mass common to Confessors with proper prayers approved by Us, and in conformity with the rubrics of the Missal and the Roman Breviary. But the recitation of the Office and the celebration of Mass, We grant only to the cities and dioceses of Rouen, Rheims, and Paris, and to all the churches and oratories of the pious houses of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, by all the faithful who are obliged to recite the canonical hours; and as regards the Mass, by all priests, both secular and regular, frequenting the churches in which the feast shall be celebrated. Finally, We grant that the solemnity of the beatification of the Venerable John Baptist de la Salle be celebrated in the aforesaid churches, with the Office and Mass of double major rite, and We ordain that this be done on whatever day within the year, the respective Ordinaries shall decide upon, after the said solemnity, as it may be found convenient as to time, shall have been celebrated in the upper hall of the portico of the Vatican Basilica—all constitutions, Apostolic ordinances and decrees *de non cultu* to

celebrata fuerint. Non obstantibus Constitutionibus et Ordinationibus apostolicis ac decretis de non cultu editis, cæterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Volumus autem ut harum Litterarum exemplis etiam impressis, dummodo manu Secretarii supradictæ Congregationis subscripta sint et sigillo Præfecti munita, eadem prorsus fides in disputationibus etiam judicialibus habeatur, quæ Nostræ voluntatis significationi, hisce Litteris ostensis, haberetur. Datum Romæ, apud S. Petrum sub annulo Piscatoris die XIV Febr. MDCCCLXXXVIII, Pontificatus Nostri anno decimo.

Loc. † sigilli.

M. Card. LEDÓCHOWSKI.

the contrary notwithstanding. And it is Our pleasure that even printed copies of these present Letters, provided they be signed by the hand of the Secretary of the aforesaid Congregation, and furnished with the seal of the Prefect, shall possess all the force, even in judicial discussions, that these present Letters containing the expression of Our will, if shown, would possess. Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, under the ring of the Fisherman, this 14th day of February 1888, and the 10th year of Our Pontificate.

M. Card. LEDÓCHOWSKI.

L. † S.

DIE IV MAIL.

Missæ Justus, de Communi Conf. non Pont. 2º loco.

ORATIO.

Deus, qui, ad salutarem pauperum eruditionem ac dandam parvulis scientiam, Beatum Joannem Baptistam Confessorem excitasti, et novam per eum in Ecclesia familiam collegisti : da eos, quæsumus, qui christianam instituunt infantiam, ejusdem semper exemplis insistere et intercessione proficere : Per Dominum nostrum.

SECRETA.

Munera tibi, Domine, dicata sanctifica : quorum ubertate repleta familia tua, intercedente Beato Joanne Baptista Confessore, tuis eruditionibus multiplicetur et donis : Per Dominum.

POSTCOMMUNIO.

Cælesti dapæ refecti, te supplices, Domine, deprecamur : ut, Beati Joannis Baptistæ meritis, bonitatem, et disciplinam, et scientiam hauriamus de plenitudine Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi : Qui tecum vivit et regnat.

MAY 4TH.

Massæ Justus, Common to Confessors not Pontiffs. 2º loco.

PRAYER.

O God, Who didst raise up the Blessed John Baptist, Confessor, to teach the poor the way of salvation, and to give science to little ones, and Who hast through him gathered together a new family in the Church, grant, we beseech Thee, unto all those that instruct Christian youth, always to follow his example and profit by his intercession. Through Our Lord.

SECRET.

Sanctify the gifts offered to Thee, O Lord, that Thy family, being enriched with the abundance thereof, may, through the intercession of the Blessed John Baptist, Confessor, be increased by Thy teachings and Thy gifts. Through Our Lord.

POSTCOMMUNION.

Refreshed with celestial food, we suppliantly entreat Thee, O Lord, that through the merits of Blessed John Baptist, we may drink in goodness, discipline and science out of the fulness of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth.

 DECRETUM.

In Apostolicis Litteris in forma Brevis propediem expediendis ad assequendam formalem Beatificationem ven. servi Dei JOANNIS BAPTISTÆ DE LA SALLE, fundatoris Congregationis Fratrum Scholarum christianarum, quum, ex majorum præscripto et praxi Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis, apponendæ sint Orationes propriæ in Officio et Missa de Communi in honorem novi Beati, legendæ ab iis omnibus quibus, in Brevi recensito, Officium ipsum persolvendi Missamque celebrandi facultas impertitur : Sacra eadem Congregatio, utendo facultatibus sibi specialiter a sanctissimo Domino nostro Leone Papa XIII tributis, ad humillimas preces Rev. Fr. Robustiani e memorata Congregatione, Causæ Postulatoris, suprascriptas Orationes proprias, a R. P. D. Augustino Caprara S. Fidei Promotore revisas, benigne approbavit atque ab omnibus, quibus Officium cum Missa concessum est, post expletam formalem Beatificationem, recitari posse indulsit. Contrariis non obstantibus quibuscumque. Die 9 decembris 1887.

A. Card. BIANCHI,
S. R. C. Præfectus.

L. † S.

Laurentius SALVATI,
S. R. C. Secretarius.

Concordat cum suo originali. In fidem, etc. Ex Secretaria Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis hac die 15 februarii 1888.

Pro R. P. D. Laurentius SALVATI,
Secretario,

Joannes PONZI,
Substitutus.

 DECREE.

Whereas, according to ancient customs and the practice of the Holy Congregation of Rites, to the Apostolical Brief recently issued for the formal Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God, John Baptist de la Salle, founder of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, certain prayers are to be added proper to the Office and Mass of the newly Beatified, to be recited by all those included in the said Brief and authorized to recite the Office and celebrate the Mass; therefore, the aforesaid Holy Congregation, exercising the special faculties given it by Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII., and humbly

petitioned by the Reverend Brother Robustinian of the above-named Congregation, Postulator of the Cause, hath graciously approved the Prayers herein set down and revised by the Reverend Father Augustin Caprara, Promotor of the Holy Faith, and permits the said Prayers to be recited by all those to whom the Mass and Office have been conceded, after the ceremony of Beatification shall have been proceeded with. All other things to the contrary notwithstanding. December 9th 1887.

A. Card. BIANCHI,
Prefect Holy Congregation of Rites.

L. † S.

Laurence SALVATI,
Secretary Holy Congregation of Rites.

The above agrees with its original. In testimony whereof, etc. From the Bureau of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, this 15th day of February 1888.

Signed for the Rev. Father Lawrence SALVATI,
Secretary,

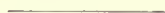
John PONZI,
Substitute.

II

INSCRIPTIONS WHICH, ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19TH 1888,
DECORATED THE HALL OF CANONIZATION AT SAINT PETER'S IN ROME.



MARIA . MAGDALENE . VICTORIA . FERRY
GRAVIBUS . DUODECIM . ANNOS . TENTATA . MORBIS
SANGUINEM . ORE . EJECTABAT
TOTO . INTUMUERAT . CORPORE
CONTREMISCEBAT . ARTUBUS
DOLORE . AD . IMA . CORDIS . LAPSO
ENECABATUR
EAM . BLANDIS . BEATUS . DE . LA . SALLE . COMPELLANS . VOCIBUS
DIEM . ET . HORAM . QUA . CONVALESCERET . PRÆMONSTRAT
EVENTUS . FIDEM . VERBIS . PRÆSTAT ¹



ADELMINIANUS . SODALIS . A . SCHOLIS . CHRISTIANIS
EARUMQUE . PRÆSES . IN . COLLEGIO . S . NICOLAI . LUTETIÆ
TOTO . TORPEBAT . CORPORE
PEDES . ET . ARTUS . RIGEBANT
INTER . MANUS . SUBLATUS
AD . TUMULUM . BEATI . DE . LA . SALLE
LACRIMIS . OBORTIS . ORAT
SURGIT . INCOLUMIS
CELERI . GRESSU . DOMUM . CONTENDIT ²

¹ Mary Magdalene Victoria Ferry, — suffering from a grave malady during twelve years, — vomited blood. — The whole body became swollen, — the members were trembling. — Attacked by acute pains in the centre of the heart, — she was dying. — Blessed de la Salle, addressing her a benevolent word, — announces the day and the hour of her cure. — The event confirms the prophecy.

² Aldelminien, Brother of the Christian schools, — being Director in the school of S. Nicholas, Paris, — had his whole body disordered, — feet and limbs stiffened. — Carried in arms — to the tomb of Blessed de la Salle, — weeping, he prays; — he rises up cured; — at a rapid pace he returns to the house.

STEPHANUS . DE . SUZANNE
 PUER . UNDECIM . ANNOS . NATUS
 EXTREMUM . TRAHEBAT . SPIRITUM
 TUSSI . QUATIEBATUR . ANHELA
 IN . SE . PPLICATUS . CONTRAXERAT . ARTUS
 MENTO . GENUA . TANGEBAT
 , FEBRI . UREBATUR
 HUMANA . SPE . DEJECTI . PARENTES
 AD . BEATUM . DE . LA . SALLE . CONFUGIUNT
 SUB . EXITUM . PRECUM . NOVENDIALIUM
 STEPHANUS . MORBO . LEVATUR
 LETUS . GRADITUR ¹

JOANNI . BAPTISTÆ . DE . LA . SALLE
 AUCTORI . ET . PARENTI
 SODALII . A . SCHOLIS . CHRISTIANIS
 CÆLITUM . BEATORUM . HONORIBUS . AUCTO
 CATHOLICUS . ORBIS
 SUPPLICES . ADMOVET . PRECES
 ADMISCETQUE . LACRIMAS
 NE . PUEBORUM . INSTITUTIO
 IN . GRAVE . DISCHIMEN . AB . IMPROBIS . VOCATA
 A . SANCTIS . RELIGIONIS . LEGIBUS
 DISSIDEAT ²

¹ Stephen de Suzanne, — a child eleven years old, — was about breathing his last. — Racked by a suffocating cough, — his limbs bent and contracted, — his chin touching his knees; — he was burning with fever. — His parents, having lost human hope, — had recourse to Blessed de la Salle. — At the end of the Novena, — Stephen, relieved of all sickness, — joyfully walks.

² To John Baptist de la Salle, — Founder and Father — of the Brothers of the Christian schools, — raised to the honours of the Blessed, — the whole Catholic world — sends up prayer and supplication, — mingled with tears — that the education of youth, — placed in grave peril by impiety, — may not deviate — from the holy laws of religion.

III.

PASTORAL LETTER

OF

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS,

ANNOUNCING

A SOLEMN TRIDUUM

IN HONOR OF BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE,

Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.



FRANCIS - MARY - BENJAMIN RICHARD, by the grace of God and the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Paris, to the Clergy and Faithful of our Diocese, health and benediction in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

For the last two months, solemnities in honor of the servants of God to whom the Sovereign Pontiff has recently discerned the honors or canonization or beatification have succeeded one another in Rome. The glorification of the Saints always brings to the Church new joy and strength; it throws light upon one side of the history of humanity which is too often left in the shade. Historians delight in relating brilliant facts; they easily forget, or they disdain even, to speak of those modest men who, in every age, have labored with heroic virtue to procure glory to God, salvation for souls, and the alleviation of every suffering. And yet, these men who led a humble life on earth, were the best part of humanity. When you study them more closely,

you are enchanted with the virtues that they practised. The beauty and grandeur of the Christian soul reveals itself to you. You feel encouraged to grow better, and in considering that you also belong to this same race of Adam which, amidst its wanderings, produces such noble children, you say with St Augustin : — “ And why should not I do what these men and these women have done before me? ”

All ages and all nations go to form the great family of Saints. Thus, in the recent solemnities, we have seen glorified servants of God belonging to the various nations of Europe. France reckons two of her children amongst them, Blessed Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort, born in 1673, and Blessed John Baptist de la Salle, born in 1651. They fell asleep in the peace of the Lord, the first in 1716, the second in 1719. Both came to be initiated into the sacerdotal life at the seminary of Saint Sulpice, where the traditions of the Oliers, the Vincents of Paul, the Condrens, raised up by God in the eighteenth century for the sanctification of the clergy, have been faithfully preserved from their origin.

A powerful missionary in word and in work, Blessed Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort has left a memory still living in our provinces of Brittany and Poitou. Round his tomb, in the Vendean village of Saint Laurent on Sèvres, in the diocese of Luçon, are grouped the two Religious families that he founded — the Priests and Brothers of the Company of Mary, and the Daughters of Wisdom. When, a few months hence, the Bishop of Luçon convokes the populations of his own and the neighboring dioceses, we shall see them arise to come and pay their homage to the servant of God. Has he not, indeed, left the print of his footsteps in every parish that he has evangelized? Do not the people still come to kneel at the foot of the Calvaries where he planted the Cross at the end of every mission? The echoes of these countries still repeat the songs that Blessed Father de Montfort composed, and which the populations have remembered these hundred and fifty years.

The other provinces of France will not remain indifferent to the glory of this priest who continued the chain of our great missionaries, such as Vincent Ferrier and Francis Regis. But closer bonds link Blessed de la Salle to our diocese.

Three towns especially claim a title to his protection— Rheims, which was his cradle; Rouen, which guards his tomb, and Paris, where Providence placed the head quarters of his Institute. We know what honors the illustrious mother-churches of Rheims and Rouen are preparing to render to the servant of God. We shall endeavor, on our side, dearly beloved Brethren, to bring to him our tribute of respect and veneration.

Blessed John Baptist de la Salle, as the founder of the Brothers of the Christian schools, represents in the Church one of the most admirable types of holiness.

Every word of the Divine Master in the Gospel is marvellously fertile, and almost invariably this fertility manifests itself by an institution which Providence raises up at the hour marked in the decrees of God. Our Saviour said : — “ Suffer the little ones to come unto me,” and the Church has always surrounded the little ones with tender care. But a permanent institution was needed for the exercise of this solicitude. At the moment when the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were producing an expansion hitherto unknown of the arts of reading and writing, God raised up the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools.

The children of the working classes were calling out for disinterested and competent masters who would train them at the same time in knowledge and in virtue. The servant of God was called upon to undertake this work. As it so often happens with the founders of orders, John Baptist de la Salle does not at first perceive the extent of the enterprise he was destined to achieve; but he understands that it must be founded on poverty and penance. He strips himself of all his goods, and distributes them to the poor. Thus poor himself, he goes generously forth with disciples equally poor, to the service of the working classes, who call out his self-devotion. Then began that powerful attraction which has never ceased to draw thousands of children to the Christian schools.

Blessed John Baptist de la Salle, inspired by Divine grace, created the real school-master of the child of the working classes. By the holy engagement of religious vows, the Brothers set themselves free from all cares foreign to their mission. Their work is hard; but they will be sustained in their task by the love of Our Lord, who sends

them to train unto Christian life those little ones for whom He died. They will study in order to impart to the children all knowledge that can be of use to them in their social position; but they will strictly refrain from all studies foreign to their mission, as these would have no other aim than the satisfaction of curiosity or personal vanity. They will form these children into men capable of serving their country usefully and modestly; they will prepare them above all to be Christians, for they know that, according to the words of St Paul, piety is useful in all ways, and that it has the promises of this life and the next.

Cast a mental glance, dearly beloved Brethren, not only over Europe, but over all the countries of the world where the children of Blessed de la Salle are to be found, and you will be struck with admiration for the creative power which God gave to this poor and humble priest, often persecuted during his life, and who showed forth in his person the truth of the Divine oracle— *Infirma mundi elegit Deus ut confundat fortia*: "God chose what is least according to this world to confound what is mightiest."

Providence has opportunities that we should never cease admiring. If the Institute of the Brothers sprang into existence at the very moment that society was in need of its ministry, the hour of its Blessed founder's glorification is no less opportune. Just as the Christian schools are most fiercely attacked, just as new theories are banishing religious education and proclaiming a lamentable neutrality which goes the length of denying Christian faith and belief in the very existence of God, Providence proclaims the glory of the true friend of childhood, of the pre-eminently Christian school-master. And, assuredly, public conscience, and still less the paternal instinct, will not fail to understand this. Fathers and mothers who want good education for their children will take them to the sons of Blessed de la Salle. If we may employ the word, it is a veritable plebiscite which is proclaiming the excellence and the necessity of Christian education.

Such, very dear Brethren, is the grand and salutary lesson to be gathered from the solemnities we are about to celebrate in honor of Blessed de la Salle. The Church, in glorifying the father, also covers the children with her blessings and her gratitude. O sons of Blessed de la Salle, we pay the debt of the Church in offering a just tribute to your self-devotion. It is not the praise that men give and receive,

the vain reward of human efforts. It is the testimony which Our Lord and His Church give to those who work in self-forgetfulness : “ Courage, good and faithful servants ! ” Yes, courage, because your hope is in God, and what you are asking of your beloved father is, we well know, that he will renew in you his life of immolation, poverty and obedience. Your faith, according to the promise of the Divine Master, will make you triumph over this world— *Hæc est victoria quæ vincit mundum, fides nostra.*

We also, very dear Brethren, shall have in the glorification of Blessed de la Salle a reward and an encouragement for the work of the Christian schools, that you have so generously undertaken, and carried on with such perseverance.

Nor is it only the Brothers of our schools, but all Christian masters who will feel honored and stimulated to work, by the honors which the Church has discerned to the servant of God. Blessed de la Salle, with that intuition which God gives to Saints, saw that there was room, by the side of the Institute of Brothers, for secular Christian masters. He several times founded what our fathers called seminaries, but what we now call normal schools of teachers. We must not forget this trait in his life. It shows us that the Church, in her solicitude, blesses and embraces every form of self-devotion.

It was, therefore, meet, very dear Brethren, that we should celebrate by solemn festivities the beatification of the servant of God. These festivities will take place on the 13th, 14th and 15th of March, in the church of Saint Sulpice. We have chosen this church designedly; it deserved the preference for many reasons. The servant of God was a student of the seminary of Saint Sulpice. It was in this parish that he founded and kept up his principal schools, led by a secret inspiration of God to place the centre of his Institute in Paris.

A Pontifical mass will be celebrated on each of those three days, the panegyric of the servant of God will be pronounced in the afternoon, according to the programme already published with our approbation.

We will ourselves sing mass on Thursday, the third day of the *Triduum*, and after mass we will give the Apostolical benediction, with the plenary indulgence, according to the power bestowed on us by the Holy Father, at the pilgrims' audience in Rome, the 8th of January of this year.

By a decree addressed to the Institute of the Brothers, last February 25th, the faithful who, having confessed and received Holy Communion, visit the church of Saint Sulpice during the *Triduum*, and pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, will gain a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in Purgatory. An indulgence of one hundred years, likewise applicable to the souls in Purgatory, may be gained once a day by the faithful who, with contrite heart, visit the same church.

We convoke you, very dear Brethren, to take part in these religious solemnities, during which we shall offer to God our most fervent prayers to obtain his blessing on the Institute of the Brothers, on Christian masters, and on the work of the Christian schools.

Given in Paris, under our hand, our seal and the counter-seal of the chancellor of our Archbishopric, on the Feast of St Thomas Aquinas, March 7th 1888.

† FRANÇOIS, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

By order of His grace the Archbishop.

E. PETIT, *Vic. gen., Chancellor.*



IV.

PASTORAL LETTER

OF

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO,

ANNOUNCING

A TRIDUUM

IN HONOR OF BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH, by the grace of God, and the appointment of the Holy See, Archbishop of Toronto, Assistant at the Pontifical throne, etc., etc., to the beloved Clergy, Religious Communities, and devout Laity of this Archdiocese: Health and Blessing in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED,

The Holy Church of God is the fruitful Mother of innumerable Saints. From the first Martyrs and Confessors of the faith to the Martyrs and Confessors of the present century, millions of her children have signalized themselves by the most heroic virtues—in the practice of the most ardent love of God and of their neighbor. In the latter ages, since the rise of Protestantism, the Church has produced numbers of holy personages who, as Bishops, Priests, or Founders of Religious

Orders, have gloriously combatted heresy and ignorance. As in days past, so in our days, Missionaries throughout the world labor even to the shedding of their blood in this cause.

To dispel the darkness of error, to instruct especially the poor and the middle classes in the knowledge of God, and in the rudiments of secular knowledge necessary for their condition of life, God raised up Blessed John Baptist de la Salle, who was born in France in the year 1651, and slept in the Lord, A.D. 1719, after diffusing the odor of perfect sanctity both by his own life and by the institution of a Religious Order, to continue the work in which he himself was engaged—the instruction of youth.

These loving words of our Divine Savior, so fruitful of sweetness and blessing: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God” (St Mark, x, 14); and these other words: “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me” (St Matth., xxv, 40); and that expression of the Holy Ghost by the lips of the Angel: “They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars to all eternity” (Dan., xii, 3), have produced wonderful fruit in the souls of God’s servants, in Apostles, in innumerable Missionaries, and in Founders of Religious Orders, whose number is known to the Almighty alone.

The Church has at all times encouraged the institution of higher schools of learning. Universities and Colleges sprang up in every country under her care. Each Bishop was obliged to have in his diocese schools of higher learning to supply well-trained Clergy for his diocese, and each Parish Priest endeavored to have what was known as a Parochial School.

The monasteries were the principal seats of the higher studies. It is but recently that States have undertaken to provide and maintain schools for the education of the people. Since they have done so, the enemies of the Church loudly proclaim that she was the friend of ignorance, whereas the Church preserved for the world whatever learning and learned records were left after the invasion of the barbarians and the breaking up of the Roman Empire, in days when States were rabbles, and Kings could not sign their names. We hear the same calumny to-day. The Church gets no credit for all her past labor in preserving and extending the civilization of the world. Now,

whatever is done by the State in favor of education is entirely, but falsely, attributed to Protestantism.

The Church has at all times maintained that secular knowledge without religious training is not really an education of the moral man, but the raising of the temporal above the spiritual, and hence, a two-edged sword is put in the hands of men without a just appreciation of God's Commandments. We see this every day in the robberies of banks and swindling and speculation and other grievous crimes committed by very smart men. Prisons are filled with such men. The best thinkers of the age are raising their voices against Godless education.

In His divine Providence God raises up in His Church men fitted to battle with the evils of the age. At the time of the birth of Blessed de la Salle it was impossible for the Church to provide, by the means then at her disposal, for the education of the masses of the people. There was a growing necessity for free schools for the poor. But to have free schools it was, above all, necessary to have proper teachers, who would voluntarily consecrate their lives to teaching, requiring only food and clothing for their services, as the poor could not requite them, and the State was doing nothing for the education of the poor. The education of the middle and lower classes could only at that time be carried on by a Religious Order supported by generous Catholics and by the Church. But, to have competent teachers, a Normal School for their training was an absolute necessity. Blessed de la Salle instituted such an Order, and founded the first Normal School recorded in the whole history of pedagogy.

This Normal School was used not only for his own novices, but also for seculars who were sent there by Priests and Bishops, to be trained as teachers with de la Salle's own disciples. The object of these good Priests and Bishops was to have the young masters take charge of schools the Brothers could not accept owing to want of a sufficient number to supply all demands. The Normal Schools are kept up in the Order and their methods and equipment are the finest in the world, and are the models on which State Normal Schools have been formed. Blessed de la Salle was the originator of the mutual-simultaneous system of education, often erroneously ascribed to Lancaster and Bell. In this system the novices are carefully drilled in the Christian Brothers' Normal Schools, and none leave those schools without strict

examination and certificate of qualification as teachers. " In the *science* of teaching, " says a recent writer, " not a single step in advance of de la Salle has yet been made in any quarter ¹. "

The methods and school-books of the Brothers have a world-wide reputation. In the educational congresses held in the United States, among the most scholarly papers read are those from the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who are sent by the Institute as delegates to these assemblies.

We here briefly sketch the life of this Blessed Benefactor of the human race.

His father, a fervent Christian, was Chancellor of State to the King of France and President of the High Court of Rheims. His mother was equally noble and pious. John Baptist, as he grew up, was a model of purity, obedience, and studiousness. He entered the Grand Seminary of Saint Sulpice, in Paris, and made there a course of theology taking the degree of Doctor of Divinity. At an early age he was appointed Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims, and was ordained Priest in 1678. He burned with the love of God and a most earnest desire to save the souls of youth. Shortly after his ordination he met a M. Nyel—a descendant of the great O'Neills, of the Emerald Isle—who was endeavoring to found free schools, and who had associated with him in the work a few young men of noble and generous dispositions. The holy Servant of God had found precisely what he wanted. In course of time M. Nyel retired from his office, and left the youthful organization to the care of Father de la Salle, who, finding it was the will of God that he should direct these young men, provided them with a house and supported them himself from his revenues. But this demanded a great sacrifice. He was a Priest and of noble birth. The teachers were poor and did not aspire to the ecclesiastical state. De la Salle could not divest himself of his priesthood, yet he determined to become one of themselves. For this purpose he resigned his canonry and relinquished all his property in favor of the poor. The good work prospered in spite of the difficulties which the enemy of salvation threw in its way.

The Holy Founder's deep veneration for the Church and his profound respect for Christ's Vicar on earth prompted him to send two Brothers

¹ *The Pastor*, March 1888.

to Rome¹. Through the kindness of Cardinal d'Estrées, Brother Gabriel was received in private audience by His Holiness Innocent XII., who treated him with kindness, promised to protect him, and blessed the Institute. Brother Gabriel remained in Rome till, in 1725, by a solemn Bull of His Holiness Benedict XIII., the rules given to the Brothers by their Blessed Founder were approved, and the Society was raised to the rank of a Religious Order under the title of INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

The Institute was legally recognized in France by Louis XV. In France God raised up two great Saints to protect the Irish driven from their homes on account of their Religion—St Vincent de Paul and Blessed John Baptist de la Salle. St Vincent received and procured places for hundreds of Irish Priests, and Blessed John Baptist de la Salle took into his establishments of learning a great many of the sons of the nobles of the Isle of Saints, who would not conform to the religion of the King, and hence were deprived of all they possessed.

The work commenced by the Blessed Servant of God grew and prospered. The French Revolution did not crush it. Schools of the Brothers are now found throughout the world. An idea of the immense work the Brothers are now doing may be gained from a few figures taken from the statistics of the Institute which we append in a note to this Pastoral².

Not until the generalship of the Very Honored Brother Philip, who was elected in 1838, were any steps taken for the canonization of this benefactor of humanity. He was declared Venerable by His Holiness Gregory XVI., in 1840. That he practiced the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the moral virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude in a heroic degree, was decided by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in public session, presided over by His Holiness Pius IX., in 1873. The three miracles operated through his intercession were proved to the satisfaction of the Sacred Congregations, and were accepted by the Pope in 1887. Finally on the 19th of last February, in the presence of numerous Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, the Superior General of the Order, Very Honored Brother Joseph, representatives of the various provinces of the Institute through-

¹ Only one of the Brothers—Brother Gabriel Drolin—reached Rome. = ² These figures have been already given.

out the world, the students of the Vatican Seminary, and a large number of friends, in the great Canonization hall over the Loggia of St Peter's—our Holy Father, Leo XIII., solemnly beatified John Baptist de la Salle.

The Catholics of Toronto and St Catharine's owe much to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They have taught the children admirably both secular and religious science for nearly forty years, and have been content with the scant pittance the Catholics could afford to pay them, for they are true servants of God, and they never relinquish their task nor lessen their ardor in their holy and self-sacrificing work. If we have to-day the magnificent buildings of the De la Salle Institute on Duke Street, we owe it to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

We shall, therefore, celebrate with gratitude and with all religious pomp the last day of the Triduum in honor of the Beatification of their Holy Institutor, the 4th of May, the day appointed by the Holy See for the annual celebration of the feast of the Blessed John Baptist de la Salle.

At 9.30 we shall celebrate a Pontifical High Mass in our Cathedral, at which the rising generation, the present and former pupils of the Catholic schools of this city, will assist, and supply the minor offices and the chant. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., has granted a plenary indulgence, on the usual conditions, to all the faithful, who will confess, receive communion worthily during the Triduum, which will take place on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of May, visit the church where it is celebrated (the Cathedral), and there pray for some time for the conversion of sinners and the other intentions of His Holiness. An indulgence of one hundred years may be gained by those who, with contrite heart, visit the Cathedral, and there pray for the same intentions, once a day each day of the Triduum.

The pupils of the Schools will receive Holy Communion on the 3rd of May. A panegyric will be delivered by our Vicar General, Very Rev'd Father Rooney, at the High Mass, and Rev'd Father McCann will preach in the evening at Vespers at 7.30 in the Cathedral, where Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament will be given, and a *Te Deum* will be chanted to thank God for His blessings bestowed on His faithful servant, John Baptist de la Salle, on his Congregation, and on all those to whom the happy influence of the Order is extended.

This pastoral letter shall be read in all the Churches, and in the Chapels of Religious Communities in our Archdiocese the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at St Michael's Palace, Toronto, on the Feast of St Mark, April 25th 1888.

† JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH,
ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO.

By order of His Grace the Archbishop,

J. F. McBRIDE, *Priest, Secretary.*



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5° HEAD-LETTERS AND TAIL-PIECES.

Édouard Garnier and Lambert have endeavored to revive the ornamentation of the end of the seventeenth century in these secondary elements of so important an illustration; but however large the share given to decoration, the moral and religious idea has not been lost out even here. Each of these letters and tail-pieces expresses one of the functions of the Institute founded by Blessed de la Salle, one of the elements of his life— Teaching (pp. 11, 32, 61, 128, 301); the Alphabet (pp. 129, 225, 411, etc.); Science (p. 273, etc.); Prayer (p. 3, etc.); Worship (pp. xv, etc.); the Eucharist, which keeps up the courage of the masters' heart (pp. 247, 406, etc.); the litter-bearers (p. 153); the memory of the Passion of Christ (p. 33, etc.); the Cross (p. 97), etc. etc. A few tail-pieces are, by exception, devoted to subjects that are more than ornamental— as, for instance, the school-master, from Boissieu (p. 64); the Brothers, by Marlet (p. 519); the marker found by M. Golia Didot at Bourbon-l'Archambaud (p. xii) and the portrait of Blessed de la Salle (p. 642), etc.

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A. — MANUSCRIPTS.

- ARCHIVES (NATIONAL), *Paris*. — Rights and functions of the Precentor. L. 492, 493. — *Factum* against the Pastors and the University. LL. 475. — Documents relating to the parish of Saint Sulpice. L. 710-712. — Notes on various churches of Paris. L. 716-717. — Receipts of the writing-masters (1673-1775). Y. 9335 to 9340.
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¹ See, pp. 645 et seq., the following Documents *in extenso*: Brief of his Holiness Leo XIII. for the Beatification of Venerable J. B. de la Salle; ornamental inscriptions for the hall of Canonization; Pastoral letter of the Archbishop of Paris; Pastoral letter of his Grace the Archbishop of Toronto.

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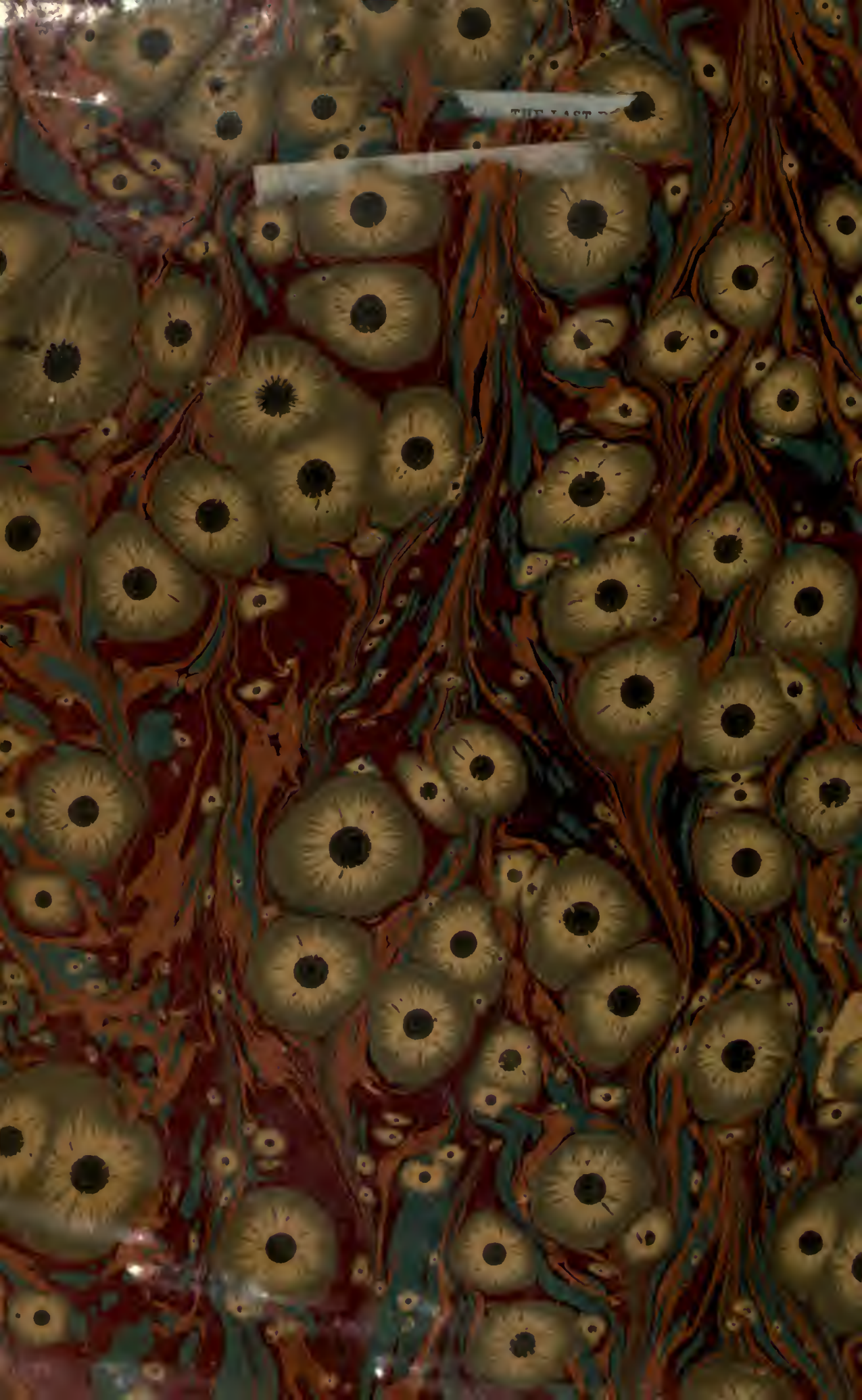


DECLARATION.

We submit the present book to the judgment of the Holy See, and we disavow in it anything which, contrary to our intention, may not be conformable to the teaching of the Church. Secondly we declare that what it contains is based on human belief, except in those matters on which the Apostolic See has already passed judgment.

This declaration, in our intention, applies to every edition of this work.

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